

THE ISLAMIC MORAL SYSTEM

A COMMENTARY OF SURAH AL-HUJURAT

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The Islamic Moral System Commentary of Surah al–Hujurat

BOOK ID

Author(s): Ayatullah Mirza Jafar Subhani

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point

In a detailed commentary of Surah al-Hujurat, Ayatullah Ja'far Subhari elaborates on the ethical aspects behinds its revelation and expounds on a range of ethical problems that are experienced in society which are thoroughly dealt with by Islamic .teachings

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Biography of Ayatullah Ja`far Subhani

point

The golden pages of history are replete with individuals who have sacrificed their lives for the guidance and leadership of humanity and throughout the ages, we see many scholars who have dedicated their lives to the path of progress and spiritual upliftment of mankind. One such scholar who is also one of the greatest thinkers of the Islamic world is Ayatullah Hajj Shaykh Ja`far Subhani who has spent his entire life in research, writing and teaching and has struggled through these means to lift the .culture and level of humanity

Ayatullah Subhani was born on the ۲۸th of Shawwal in the year ۱۳۴۷ AH (۱۹۲۶ CE) in the city of Tabriz (in Iran) into a scholarly and well-respected family. His father was the late Ayatullah Shaykh Muhammad Husain Subhani Khayabani who spent more than fifty years teaching, writing and guiding the people

and was also responsible for the training and educating of the future teachers and .leaders of the society

After completing his primary school and the introductory studies, Ayatullah Subhani then went on to study the books of Farsi literature and grammar. Following this, at the age of ۱۴ (۱۳۶۱ AH/۱۹۴۰ CE) he proceeded to enter into the Theological Seminary of Tabriz named Talibiyah and was busy in the preliminary and second level of studies in .the Theological Seminary

He studied the `Arabic language under the guidance of the following deceased scholars: Hajj Shaykh Hasan Nahwi and Shaykh `Ali Akbar Mudarris Khayabani (author of the book Rayhanatul Adab). These studies took him five years – until the year ۱۳۶۵ AH (۱۹۴۴ CE) after with Ayatullah Subhani was able to complete the second level of theological studies and began the highest level of Islamic studies (Kharij) in Fiqh, Usulul Fiqh and Philosophy. During this period of his studies, he benefited from :the knowledge of teachers such as

The Late Ayatullah al-`Uzma al-Hajj as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain Burujerdi (d. .۱ (۱۳۸۰ AH/۱۹۵۹ CE

The Late Ayatullah al-`Uzma al-Hajj as-Sayyid Muhammad Hujjat Kuhkamari (d. .۲ (۱۳۷۲ AH/۱۹۵۱ CE

The Late Ayatullah al-`Uzma al-Hajj as-Sayyid Ruhullah al-Musawi Khumayni (d. .۳ (۱۴۰۹ AH/۱۹۸۸ CE

In the field of Philosophy, he studied the commentary of the book Manzumah and al-Asfar of Mullah Sadra (may Allah be pleased with him) and also benefited from private lessons in the subject of realism under the tutelage of the late `Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husain Taba'taba'i (may Allah

.(be pleased with him

In addition, he studied `Ilmul Kalam under the late Sayyid Muhammad Badkubae (d. .(۱۳۹۰ AH/۱۹۶۹ CE

Ayatullah Subhani is one of those scholars who took up the pen and writing from a very young age and since then, his entire life has been spent in the fields of teaching and writing. Because of this, we see that the first book he ever wrote which was named The Criterion of Thinking (in the field of Logic) was written when he was a !mere ۱۷ years old

At the age of ۱۸, he began teaching the secondary level of Islamic studies (Sutuh) and was imparting knowledge in the fields of Fiqh, Usul, Philosophy, Hadith and other .subjects

In addition, he has written notes on the lectures of Usulul Fiqh of the late Ayatullah .Khumayni which have been recently printed

Through all of this work, he has transformed himself into a teacher who goes deep into a subject and an effective thinker such that many important tasks have been :imparted onto him, such as

Establishing a centre for the teaching of `Ilmul Kalam and a research library and (۱ .facility for those who are conducting research in the Islamic sciences

.Written one complete topic-wise commentary of the Qur'an in ten volumes (۲

Prepared and taught one complete course – consisting of ۱۶ printed volumes of (۳ .books – in the fields of the History of Fiqh and the Fuqaha

Prepared and wrote manuals for the teaching of Usulul Fiqh, `Ilmul Kalam, Hadith, (۴ `Ilmul Rijal and the

history and information on the various religions of the world and their sects and .divisions

We pray to Allah (Glory and Greatness be to Him) to grant the author of this work the .blessings to be able to continue on this path

Introduction

Introduction to the Fourth Printing in Farsi

Stability of Nations and the Importance of Etiquette

This book, The Islamic Moral System which was written close to thirty years ago, contains a discussion on the Islamic principles and values as mentioned in the blessed Surah of the Qur'an, al-Hujurat. These topics were explained in a way that could be easily understood by all readers and it was our intention and prayer to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) that the youth would take notice of this book, and through the manifestation of the Islamic etiquette (mentioned in this book), they would be able to .reach to great (spiritual) levels during the course of their lives

Since we desired that this close relationship with the dear readers of this book (especially the youth) should be re-established (through this work), we have edited .and re-published this work once again

We remind the readers of one point in relation to the importance of developing the :noble ethical traits, just as an `Arab poet has stated

فَإِنَّمَا الأُمَمُ، الأَخْلاَقُ مَا بَقِيَتْ فَإِنْ هُمْ ذَهَبَتْ أَخْلاَقُهُمْ ذَهَبُوا

,So then surely they are (the true) nations

;(Whose etiquette has remained behind (for us

,(Then if they lost their etiquette (when they existed

.(Then they too have ceased to exist (now

Who are those nations that had made a pledge to uphold these valuable

ethical traits such that these priceless qualities would rule supreme over them and through this, have remained in existence? If one day we see that a nation is destroyed and becomes extinct, then the only reason for this can be that they did not pay attention to the noble ethical traits, and thus they were pulled into confusion and .destruction

During the `Abbasid Empire, all of the branches of knowledge (with the exception of Akhlaq – Morals and Ethics) of the Greeks were translated into the `Arabic language and were widely and openly accepted (by others) and even the Muslims struggled (to .(understand these texts

However in the opinion of the Muslim thinkers, the ethical and moral teachings of the Greeks did not even carry the slightest importance since the moral commandments that Islam possessed were much more superb, such that no other ethical teachings could compare to them. Therefore after the book Taharatul A`raq of Ibn Maskuyah, .most of the books of Akhlaq written were concerning the Islamic etiquette

It is our hope that this book will be the guiding light to the (straight) path for the .Muslim youth

Qum, Imam as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) Institute

۶/۱۱/۱۳۷۶

۲۷th of the Blessed Month of Ramadhan, ۱۴۱۸ AH

Ja`far Subhani

Introduction to the English Translation

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammadin wa Ali Muhammad

Surah al-Hujurat, the forty-ninth chapter of the Qur’an, lays out many of the social-ethical concepts in Islam. It covers various themes from submission and obedience to

Almighty Allah and His Messenger, Prophet

p: ۵

Muhammad (peace be upon him), to the status and honour of the Prophet in eyes of Allah; its talks about the brotherhood of the Muslims and the ethical duties that they have towards one another; it emphasizes on the concern that Muslims should have for solving internal disputes, and for supporting justice against injustice; it presents the equality among the believers irrespective of their ethnic and racial differences; it highlights the importance of spiritual conviction (Iman) over the physical submission .((Islam

Al-Hujurat was my favourite Surah since my student days in Qum in the seventies. When I was invited by the Imamia Students Organisation (of Pakistan) in Ramadhan of ۱۹۷۹, I started a tafsir program in their four local chapters in Karachi and used Surah al-Hujurat as the theme. All praise is due to Allah that the program became a success even, and that tradition of tafsir in Ramadhan nights has continued ever since .in Karachi

When I came to Vancouver (Canada) in summer of ۱۹۸۳, I initiated the tafsir program in Ramadhan where I again started with Surah al-Hujurat. That Surah was also used by me as the pilot project for the plan of An Explanatory Translation of the Qur’an which has been published in three volumes covering half of the holy Qur’an (and the .(remaining three volumes will be published soon, Insha-Allah

The Persian commentary of Surah al-Hujurat by Ayatullah Shaykh Ja`far Subhani was one of the sources that I referred to when doing the tafsir of that Surah. Ayatullah

Subhani is one of the leading scholars of Qum, and his multi-volume commentary of the Qur’an (under the title of “Mafahimu ’l-Qur’an”) may be considered as a .pioneering attempt in the thematic approach of Qur’anic commentary

And so it was indeed a delight to know that Shaykh Saleem Bhimji has translated the commentary of Surah al-Hujurat of Ayatullah Subhani and has thus helped the English speaking students of the Qur’an to study the moral/ethical concepts of Islam from its .original source

May Almighty Allah bless Shaykh Saleem Bhimji for his endeavours in translating this .book and increase his tawfiqat

Amen

August ٢٠٠٣ / ٢٠ Jumadi ath-Thani ١۴٢۴ ١٨

Toronto

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Foreword

In introducing man as a creature with the ability of thought and contemplation, the Philosophers and great thinkers of the world have relied upon the phrase that man is one that possesses intelligence and the ability to – (الحيوان الناطق) a rational animal .perceive things

Such a definition is precisely correct and undeniable from the point of view of a .Philosopher since his occupation is related to the thoughts and intelligence of people

Thus, he wishes to enlighten people by inviting them to the laws and secrets behind creation and the mysteries of the universe of creation through the faculty of thought and reasoning. Consequently according to the Philosopher, a person will never reach to his true objective (in life) except through strengthening his ability to think and .reason

However, from the point of view of the Scholars of Akhlaq (Islamic Etiquette and Morals) and

others who are active in the field of training and education and those responsible for the nurturing and development of man, this definition is completely incorrect and is .not a complete nor expressive definition of man

They state this since even though half of a person's character is made up of his thought and intelligence, however the other half is derived from instinct, human nature and the (innate) inclinations whose boundaries and limits are unknown. For those who are engaged in the field of nurturing and training others, the issues of instinct and human nature of the person is much more important than his intellect and intelligence since these are the things that lead and govern a person's human nature .and his desires

There is no doubt that every individual has certain innate characteristics that he has been created with such as: love of self; desire to reach perfection; help and service to others; love for wealth, status and beauty; the feeling of fear and revenge; and other .things

These innate characteristics which guarantee the preservation of mankind and which are the source of every type of movement and development in life are so deeply rooted in a person that sometimes they take control of his destiny and make him .traverse a particular path in his life

Through the control that they possess, they penetrate deep into him and limit his power of thought and reason. It is at this point that the role of ethical teachings in the life of

a person and the necessity of having a correct guide for one's instincts is made clear. Thus, this makes the weighty responsibility that lies on the shoulders of the teachers .of Akhlaq even more apparent

The Most Important Issue in the Lives of the Youth

The principle issue in the lives of the youth is that of the control of their sentiments and feelings. The control of ones' natural instincts and keeping ones' sentiments from going to the two extremes of extravagance and miserliness is one of the greatest difficulties in the life of a person, especially during the period of ones' adolescence. This is the stage of life in which the young man or woman sees a crisis in relation to his or her feelings and where the power of the youths' internal wishes and desires take .over

For example, anger is one of the natural instincts of a person which plays an active and functional role in the life of a person and which can – in certain instances – protect the life and guarantee his existence. When a person's life is thrown into danger, this natural instinct takes control and by alerting all of the energy that the person has, it .strives to protect the person whose life has been thrown into danger by the enemy

If this natural instinct is not channelled in the proper manner, then the one who possesses this trait will be just as that person who he is being threatened by and thus, he too would be labelled as one who has anger

and rage. In addition, he would never be able to be a person of proper composure and would be such a source of anger that he would have deviated from the peaks of humanity. Since he was not able to channel his anger in the proper way, we would be .ruined such that there would be no way for him to make amends for his actions

We are able to come to this conclusion concerning each of the natural instincts that we have been given such as: sexual inclinations, inclinations towards beauty, inclinations towards wealth and status – which just like the inclination towards anger and wrath have all been tested and examined. Accordingly we reach to the conclusion that the way to happiness is to control these emotions and natural instincts and make sure that they are correctly governed. The people who are responsible for this .important task are none other than the teachers and instructors of Akhlaq

The Factors that Can Control One's Instincts

Knowledge and Wisdom .١

Socrates and Aristotle are two of the most well-known scholars of the ancient Greeks. They truly believed that the proper guide for one's natural instincts which could lead to a fruitful life of excellence and moral ethics in the heart of a human being was .possible only under the shadow of knowledge and wisdom

Under the shade of knowledge of what is good and bad, mankind would naturally gravitate towards the noble ethical traits and would seek to distance themselves from the negative ethical traits. Thus, the conclusion of this school of thought

is that the only thing that forms the foundations of ethics and etiquette is knowledge ’.and wisdom and thus, their slogan was, ‘Ethics under the shadow of knowledge

It is not a place of argument that knowledge and wisdom leave a beneficial mark on the well-being of the moral traits and can also prevent some crimes from occurring (within a society). However, we can never accept that for all times and for all people, knowledge and wisdom can completely and without any doubt be the final solution in .controlling the natural instincts of the people

Thus, some feel that the bad people within a society are the same people who did not take advantage of the knowledge available to them; and in contrast to this, (they say that) the outstanding people of the society are those that have been disciplined in the .middle schools and universities

This point is not accurate and if anyone who has knowledge of the world societies in general were to conduct a study on this issue, one would see that this statement is a lie since the increase and spread of corruption in its various forms and shapes amongst those people who have an education is not something that anyone can deny. Rather, the statistics that are published in the newspapers of the world bear witness .and make our claims solid and trustworthy

Certainly, we are not saying that a well-read engineer or a well-educated doctor can be equivalent to a person who dwells in the desert

and has corrupted himself with sins. Rather, if through this person (the one with education) demonstrating a special vigilance which is a direct product of his knowledge and intelligence, his good actions were to be changed to bad ones and he was to commit a heinous crime due to various reasons, then it can be said that his .actions have stemmed from his weak religious convictions

We personally know people who are able to write voluminous books about the dangers that can be caused by drinking alcohol, however these same people !sometimes get so drunk that they cannot even tie their own shoelaces

There are people who can write articles on the individual and societal damage that is caused by gambling and bribery and illicit relations and can organize and hold seminars in these regards, however, if you look carefully at their lives, you will definitely see that from the top of their head to the tips of their toes, they are submerged in sins and wickedness. Thus, simply having the knowledge which is a resultant of studying and attending classes has not saved them from these desires .and inclinations

There is not a single person who can claim that on its own, knowledge can prevent greed and gluttony, or that it can stop one who is in the quest of attaining a higher position. Today, we see that the world has been pulled towards wars and fighting by those people who seek a higher position and status and who are educated

people and this has occurred twice already – during World War I and World War II – in which more than one hundred million people were killed and eradicated.

There are some people who changed the name of the mentioned teachings which have been inherited from Socrates and Aristotle and in place of the word 'knowledge' substituted the word 'intellect'. By doing this, they wished to claim that through the greatness and training of the intellect and mind of a human being, one is able to strip ones' self of all sins and wrongdoings, and in their place, cultivate the noble traits of humanity.

However this agent (that of the intellect) also does not possess the ability to do this and is not much different than the first agent mentioned (knowledge). This is so because the intellect is able to control and restrain the force and power of the passions (of a person), but in the face of the demonic lusts and passions, it can be compared to a straw house being destroyed by a violent river. It can also be compared to a small lamp which offers very little light to a person while he is wandering through a dark, gloomy valley.

The natural human instincts can sometimes be compared to a flowing river. When the flow of water on the river is normal, many truckloads of gravel can stop the river from overflowing. However once the river has started to overflow and heavy rains fall upon it and the torrential

currents surge forth, then this water would take with it hundreds of tons of gravel and .sand

In normal circumstances, in the greatness of the light of his natural instincts, the intelligence of a person illuminates the path of his life and prevents him from falling into the valley of extinction, however when his natural instincts explode, then the intelligence becomes so weak and muted that even the strongest of people become lost and thus in the end, they end up falling deep into the dreadful valley of their (low) .human instincts

Training and Upbringing without Religion .۲

This is the same design and plan that Freud and those who followed him had brought forth into the sphere of operation. They stated that the issues related to moral ethics and the principles of humanity must be taught to the child while he is in the bosom of his father and mother and while in the environment of the kindergarten and primary school – and this is an obligatory requirement. Not only must they be taught these things, rather, the people (around them) must strive and struggle such that these .things become a regular part of the child's soul and spirit

For example, one of the societal crimes is the breaking of laws that takes place amongst the older people of the society. In order to prevent this moral disease from coming about, the young children must be taught and trained in the centres of learning in such a way that they do not act in any other

method, except that they respect the laws and regulations of the society. Thus, such .thinkers see no other way than this to move forward upon

In order to make this moral belief firm rooted and penetrate deep into the spirit during the period of ones' youth – right from the beginning of one's education – the laws and regulations that the kindergarten and primary school have in place must be .obeyed

The children must be made to follow these rules and the threat and punishment of going against these rules must also be practically shown to them. If the leaders (of the society) and the teachers of the children would be careful in following up their teaching with injecting the noble moral, ethical traits to the children and were to make the principles of upbringing and nurturing of the children under the shadow of continuous drills and by paying attention to them as common practice, then this would .have a very good effect on the children

The people who brought forth the idea mentioned above were negligent of one point which is: whereas it is true that nurturing and upbringing has a positive effect on the eventual success (of the child) and in the growth and development of the principles of ethics in the mind of the young children, however opposition and resistance to this in .the face of the obstinate natural instincts of a person is very rarely seen

In most times, this opposition is met with defeat and in most

instances in the face of natural desires and instincts such as: self-pride, quest for status, sexual desires and worship of the beauty (of self) - the ethics (which have been taught or imposed upon the children) are overcome and defeated. Thus, we see that the power and strength of these natural instincts is so great and the force of their blow is so powerful, that any form of upbringing which is devoid of the divine religious .teachings is completely powerless and will eventually accomplish nothing

Most often, there is a discrepancy and difference between a person's internal desires, his natural instincts and the ethical principles and the only way to satisfy one's internal desires is by throwing the ethical principles under one's feet and to not obey them. This is the case since: doing the right thing, speaking the truth, self-sacrifice, maintaining the trust that others have given, chastity and forgiveness of others – which are all clear examples of the principles of ethics and morality – necessitate that one must be deprived and give up certain things (of the material life). The woman who wishes to protect her chastity and modesty must obviously keep away from a series .of things which may bring her pleasure

Doing the right thing and speaking the truth – even if later on, would cause troubles, acting with justice and dealing with others with equality may lead to others falling into ;difficulties and may also lead to the loss in the material sphere for others

and in this event, which person would actually keep away from those things which cause one loss? In addition, the power of upbringing is not that powerful and firmly rooted that a person would be able to be transformed into a machine-like being that all sense of perception and negative emotions would be completely removed from .him

However, we cannot deny the fact that in this battle field, sometimes the victory is achieved through nurturing and upbringing. However at the same time, we cannot deny the fact that when one's sexual desires are overflowing, and when the desire to have great amounts of wealth and to attain a status (within the society) are there, the principles of upbringing that one has learnt are all thrown under one's feet and those .things that one is not permitted to perform are now made acceptable

The people who brought about this view defended their incorrect theory for some time and claimed that ethics and morality could take the place of religion and the actions of the well-mannered nations of the West was made as their document (of ethics). These people were adamant that now that the Western World had found these humanistic teachings of upbringing that there was no need for the Divine and .Heavenly teachings

However, not much time passed when they realized their mistake and the savage World War I broke out, which resulted in the killing of tens of millions of people. In addition, the entire European continent was turned upside down

by these same Western people who claimed to have ethics and morality – and this war definitely woke them up from their deep sleep and made them declare that, “The perception and intelligence of humanity has still not yet reached to the level that morals and ethics can take the place of divine religion nor where proper upbringing ”.(can take the place of religion (a complete code of life

The further ahead we advance in the history of the world, the more it is made clear that the desire to place morals and etiquette in the place of religion will not lead to any .positive results

Beneficial Ethical Traits

The moral traits that are in vogue in the West are those which provide material benefit which have been founded from the writings of Dale Carnegie. The roots of these teachings are the same moral teachings of the Ancient Greek whose distinctions and particulars we will explain later on. The principle and essence of the teachings of such a school of ethics and morality are a disguised form of well-mannered exploitation that believe: What can we do to increase our wealth and to ?make our position and status in the minds of the people firm

After a person has finished studying these books, he would have certainty that if Western Nations have implemented many of these ethical principles in their lives, for example keeping away from lying and not deceiving and tricking people, then it is because of the fact that these traits are ways that they

are able to gain (material) benefit and which lead to increases in the business market .(and to a change in the economic wheels (of the country

If one day the people see that their (material) benefit is in something opposite to this, then immediately they will change face – and this will show their true side and character. This in itself is a form of deviation from the perfect state of a human being since such people desire ethical traits only to serve their materialistic goals and pleasures, which would add greatness to their lives and economic status, not because .these traits are worthy in and of themselves and are natural and instinctive traits

Ethical Traits that Rely upon Religious Teachings .۳

The ethical teachings that are based upon religion, such that the theological beliefs of the faith and the belief that (all people) are granted rewards and punishments based on their daily actions, are what support and sustain the principle of ethics. It is through this channel that the Divine and Heavenly teachings, especially the sacred teachings of Islam have chosen (to propagate the ethical teachings) and during the course of ۱۴ .centuries, we see a brilliant outcome from traversing this path

The belief in a God who is completely aware of the inner thoughts and apparent actions of humanity; the belief in a God who is not kept unaware of anything that is upon the Earth or in the Heavens; the belief in a God who is completely aware of the number of unimaginable atoms in the universe

and the number of molecules in a particular body; the belief in a God who is the final Judge and on that Day that He judges everyone, the book of deeds of each human being which has been protected by the Angels from all sorts of errors and mistakes and is free from all sorts of materialistic aims and goals, will be brought forth and .spread open for all to see - and He will not even stop at this

Rather, the actual image of the actions that we had performed will also be brought forth through His never-ending power and all the parts of our bodies, through the unbreakable intention, will speak and bear witness to the acts that he had performed. Then, each and every person will be given the reward and punishment that they (deserve, and...(١

The firm and immutable belief in such a day is the greatest support for the noble ethical traits and is the most natural guarantee for people to act according to the principles of humanity and in reality, is the most valuable asset and most priceless treasure that the great divinely appointed Heavenly leaders have left behind for us .and we must support and keep this priceless legacy alive

The power of true belief in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and the belief in the punishment on the Day of Judgement can sometimes reach to such a level within a person that these things actually act as a deterrent to the person

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This sentence is the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an contained in various - ١ chapters of the Noble Qur'an such as: Surah Luqman (٣١), Verse ١۶; Surah al-Saba' .(٣۴), Verse ۴; and Surah al-Zilzal, (٩٩), Verses ٧ and ٨

who wants to commit a sin and would thus bring a person who wishes to commit an .evil deed to the level of a heavenly creature and infallible person

The strength of true faith in controlling a person is such that if one day, a believer was to act against what true faith entails him to act upon and went against the teachings of his natural instincts, then he would immediately think about how to repair the damage he has caused and would fall into grief and misery through this act of polluting one's own self. In order to remove the effects of the sin he had committed, without those who are responsible for judging and sentencing a person who had committed such acts, he would seriously request them to punish him or would request the punishment that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has ordained be meted out on him. In the end, he would come out of this event as a spiritually cleansed person with no burden (of sin) on his shoulders and would thus enter on the Resurrection Day as (such.(١

The Mission of Ethical Guidance of Islam

Through various types of societal, economic and ethical programs and guidelines, the religion of Islam stepped into the social arena of life and through laying this groundwork in all areas (of life), was able to bring about a valuable and original set of teachings – a set of teachings that are completely new-found, with positive qualities .which are able to (spiritually) build a society

The religion of Islam looked

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١ - In the book, The History of Punishment in Islam, we see many examples on this .issue which, to keep this discussion brief, we do not mention in detail here

favourably at ethical principles and the role of upbringing and nurturing others and has classified these as being the most important responsibilities of the Prophet of .(Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

As for the importance of this role, it is worthy to mention that the topic of training and nurturing others has been placed ahead of teaching others in the Noble Qur'an(١). This has been done since the religion of Islam wishes to announce to the leaders of society that the issue of upbringing and nurturing others is more important than teaching and educating them and thus, the slogan of the leaders of a society, in relation to the leadership and building the happiness of the entire society must be first through nurturing and then teaching. This is said because until that time that a community does not have the proper nurturing and development, teaching and .educating them will never reach to a level of ever being noticed

The Distinctions of the Islamic Ethical Teachings

Before the official appointment of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), the Ethics of the Greeks ruled over the advanced civilizations of the .world for a period of time

After relating and translating the scientific and ethical works of the Greeks, the principles of their ethical teachings were introduced into the scholarly gatherings of the Muslims without any thought and a group of Muslim scholars proceeded to expand upon and perfect these teachings and thus, wrote treatises and books in relation

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١- In the Qur'an, we read the phrase: وَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَ يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْحِكْمَةَ... "And he (the Prophet Muhammad) purifies them (nurturing and upbringing) and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom..." Surah al-Jumu`ah (٦٢), Verse ٢.

.to these works

One of the best books that shows the true value of the ethical teachings of the Greeks written by (تهـذيب الأخلاق و تطهير الأعراق)" is the book, "Tahdhibul Akhlaq Wa Tathirul A`raq Abu `Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Maskuyah (d. ۴۳۱ AH). As for the importance and worth of this book, it is sufficient to state that the late Muhaqqiq at-Tusi has written a :poem in relation to this book, of which the first line states

بِنَفْسِی کِتَّاباً حٌازَ کُلِّ فَضِیلَهٍ وَ صٌارَ لِتَکْمِیلِ لْبَرِیَّهِ ضٌامِناً

I sacrifice my soul for a Book"

,That contains all virtuous traits

And guarantees to paint the portrait

(Of the perfection of creation."(۱)

After this book of morals which elucidates upon the principles of the ethical teachings [أخلاق ناصری] of the Greeks, the next book which is also very valuable is Akhlaq-e-Nasiri written by the late Khajah Nasir ad-Din at-Tusi which had been penned according to .the methodology of the Greek books of ethics

The clear deficiency of the ethical teachings of the Greeks is that their ethical principles have been based upon the foundations of the quickly diminishing materialistic gains and have been explained and elucidated as such. For example it has been said in these books that, "If you put these ethical teachings into practice, then you will definitely find that you will be remembered in a good way and people ".would speak good things about you in the society

However these people only looked at things from a materialistic point of

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.Ta'sis al-Shi`atul Kiram lil-`Ulumil Islam, Page ۴۱۱ -۱

view and were completely uninformed of the next life and its affairs and thus, they tried to imitate the ethical teachings of the materialists – whose goal and aim was not geared towards purification of the soul and the mind. Rather, their aim and purpose was only to ensure the (ease in the) life of this world and how they could wield .influence within a society

The spiritual-ethical teachings (Akhlaq-e-Irfani) are directly opposed to the Greek ethical teachings (Akhlaq-e-Yunani), however both seek to give the same benefit, but they would never have the ability to build a persons' self or instill a moving nature within him. In addition, some of the teachings (the ethical teachings of the Greeks) cannot even be taught or presented to the common people and for the youth who are thirsty over a set of teachings that would not only beautify their spiritual presence with greatness and nobility, but that would also teach them a path and customs to follow in their lives, these teachings of the Greeks would have absolutely no appeal or .attraction

The original and firm set of teachings, which at the same time are also the most comprehensive and which contain all of the positive qualities of the religion, are the ethical teachings and guidelines found in the Noble Qur'an and the faith of Islam. All of the advantages of the material and spiritual world are completely taken into account – with the condition that it is put into practice and presented in its

.purity - distanced from any sort of artificial decorations

In some of the books which have been written under the topic of Islamic Ethics, we see a series of commandments presented which are in no way in line with the principles of the teachings of Islam. Thus, after careful research and review, it is made clear that all of the conclusions that are presented are the specific opinions of the writer of the work and they have absolutely no connection to the principle ethical .teachings of Islam

One example which we can present to highlight this point is the book entitled, "Ihya' al-`Ulum" (al-Ghazali, d. ۵۰۵ AH) which is one of the most comprehensive books of ethics, and possibly in the entire history of Islam, there has never been a more all-inclusive book written than this one. Unfortunately however, in expounding on some of the ethical issues, we see that often times there are things that in no way can be .considered as being harmonious with the teachings of Islam

The Late Muhammad Muhsin Faidh (Al-Kashani) (d. ۱۰۹۱ AH) has embellished his monumental work with countless ahadith from the leaders of Islam (the Prophet and A'immah, prayers be upon all of them) which he named, "Al-Mahajjatul Baydha Fi Tahdhibul Ahya". this book, which has been published in eight volumes has been !printed countless times to date

Necessity of Having a Movement that Encourages Ethics

There is not a single intelligent person – religious or non-religious – who, in the face of growing corruption amongst the future builders of a society (the younger

generation) who would be indifferent (to what is happening) and not feel some personal responsibility since this matter is a warning to the leaders and those who are responsible for upbringing others, that they must act as fast as possible to make .decisions and rescue this generation from falling into the valley of destruction

Due to this, there is no other option available to us except that we must strengthen our source of faith and make the principle theological beliefs stronger (in our heart) .which will be a prelude to laying the groundwork for the advancement of ethical traits

Through a correct leadership and by utilizing all the means at our disposal, we will be able to struggle and refine the ethics of the society and alongside this, through organizing religious functions and establishing seminars and in addition, the study of the reasons for the spread of corruption, we will be able to get together to publish a series of books on Islamic Ethics which are in line with the spirit, time and thoughts of .the youth of today

We say this since a majority of the books of ethics have been written in such a way that they do not confirm to the soul and level of understanding of our youth. How many times have we seen that after reading a few pages of these sorts of books, the ?person becomes tired or loses his interest to continue the book and puts it aside

,In order to assist in this lofty

humanistic goal, this humble writer has proceeded to study Surah al-Hujurat which contains a great number of principle ethical and societal teachings of the faith of Islam. The principles that have been mentioned in this Surah have been examined and analysed in such a way that people of all levels of a society would be able to make .use of them. It is our hope that this insignificant book would serve in this purpose

We pray for that day when the great scholars of Islam are able to extract all of the verses of the Qur'an that deal with ethics and through organizing and putting them in order, are able to comment and elucidate upon them.(١) This point too should also not go without saying that some parts of this book were previously printed in the scientific-religious magazine, Maktab-e-Islam, in the section on Tafsir of the Qur'an .and now, we present it in its complete form to the dear readers

Qum, Hawzah `Ilmiyyah

١٠th Dhul Qa`dah al-Haram, ١٣٩٠ AH

Ja`far Subhani

?What Objectives does this Surah Pursue

The goal of this Surah is to elucidate upon a series of life-giving commandments of Akhlaq (Ethics and Morality) and social interaction which (if put into practice), would lead an ideal civilization. These in turn could create and cultivate a pure society that is .far removed from all sorts of blameworthy moral traits

According to the unanimous verdict of all the commentators of the Qur'an, the number of verses of this Surah are eighteen. Through its own particular way of explaining things, this

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It should be noted that as far as we are aware, this task has been completed to a -١ certain level by two noble writers. This book has been printed under the name of: ."“Ethics from the point of view of the Qur'an” and “The Ethics of the Qur'an

Surah incorporates a series of comprehensive and beneficial commandments for the purification of the soul and spirit for all of humanity. If the conditions and ethical injunctions mentioned in this Surah were acted upon within all societies, then we would definitely be able to bring about a calm and peaceful environment full of consideration (for others) and contentment for all – far removed from all sorts of wicked and evil ethical traits.

This Surah gives us an overall view of a pure and uncontaminated society in which not only the tongue and ears of the individuals, rather even their thoughts and reflections are not given complete free reign, such that are free to say whatever they want to say, hear whatever they want to hear, or do whatever they wish to do in relation to other people.

The following is a list summarizing the commandments that are mentioned in this Surah:

١. This Surah begins its first commandment by bringing up a point in regards to having discipline and order, while in the presence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and the Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). The meaning of this discipline and order is that the Muslims must learn the commandments and legislations (of the religion) from Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and must not let their own inner desires and whims lead them to formulating laws and regulations.

٢. The people who have true faith are instructed and commanded how they should speak

to their leaders.

۳. The people who have true faith are also commanded that when they are given news or testimony about another person from one who commits sins in the open, is known for his wicked ways or is not scared of his transgressions (against the laws of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He), that they must not accept such a testimony from him and must stay away from all forms of rumours and gossip.

۴. The general thoughts and opinions of the people have absolutely no value when compared to the orders and directives of the infallible Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny).

۵. Each and every person possesses an ethical conscience.

۶. It is incumbent upon every Muslim that he strives for peace, and to attain this goal he must stand up against the oppressors so that he would be able to uphold the truth and maintain the rights of the oppressed.

۷. All Muslims are brothers (and sisters) of and equal to one another and it is incumbent that they all endeavour to ensure that peace and happiness are established amongst themselves.

۸. A Muslim does not have the right to make fun of another Muslim.

۹. It is forbidden to find or pick faults in other people according to the teachings of Islam.

۱۰. A true believer does not have the right to call his brother in faith by a nickname or bad name.

۱۱. It is forbidden (haram) to think bad thoughts about a believing brother (or sister).

It is expressly forbidden to spy on or pry into the secrets and private life and affairs .۱۲ .of other people

.It is a major sin to speak bad things behind the back of another Muslim .۱۳

In this Surah, the issue of racial superiority has also been brought to an end and .۱۴ the only criteria for judging who is better (than another person) is one's merit, piety and abstinence from those things which Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has .forbidden and by keeping away from all sins

After these fourteen commandments have been explained, there is another series of issues that are discussed which will be explained in their own section. When glancing over these commandments, is the superiority and dominance of the ethical Qur'anic teachings over all other ethical teachings of the world not clear and obvious for all to ?see

The Specifics of Surah al-Hujurat

This Surah was Revealed in Madinah, Not Makkah

We are able to discern which Surahs were revealed in Makkah and which were :revealed in Madinah by keeping the following two points in mind

The narrations and traditions which mention to us the place of revelation of a .۱ .specific Surah

Pondering and thinking over the contents of the verses of the Surah which usually .۲ act as a verbal chain of events that tell us if the Surah was revealed in Makkah or .Madinah

Seeing as how the cities of Makkah and Madinah were two completely different environments, we understand that each was governed by its own ways of thought, and thus the religion of Islam was put face to

.face with issues and difficulties which were specific to that particular area

Thus, after we are acquainted with the way of thinking and the particular issues of an area (Makkah or Madinah), and we have studied the contents and verses of a Surah, then we are then able to discern where the Surah or the verses of the Surah were .revealed

For instance, the environment of Makkah was one polluted with polytheism and idol worship. The Jews and Christians had not permeated into this city and thus, those who had true faith (Iman) were very small in number. The issue of Jihad and fighting were not brought up in this environment and the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon .him and his progeny) had frequent dealings and relations with the idol worshippers

Therefore, the point of difference of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) with the polytheists (of Makkah) was concerning Tawhid (the Oneness of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He) and the concept of being brought back to life on the .Day of Judgement after one was physically dead

Thus, the verses whose axis rotates around the discussion of issues such as the origin (of life), Resurrection Day and the verses which reproach Polytheism and speak about the outcome of the previous generations that were inflicted with the anger and punishment of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) due to not following His commandments and their appointed Messengers, were most often revealed in .Makkah

However the

environment in Madinah was an atmosphere of faith, virtue and piety. It was a centred where the Ahl al-Kitab - especially the Jews – had influenced and permeated into. It was an atmosphere of young men, heroes, champions and brave people who .readily accepted the teachings of Islam

In addition, it was also an environment where the Muslims had little need to discuss the foundational beliefs (Usul ad-Din) of the religion and thus it was time for them to become acquainted with a series of other issues including their practical responsibilities, the ethical and societal guidelines and the performance of devotional .acts such as Salat, Sawm (fasting), Zakat and other issues

It is because of this fact that the verses in relation to the Tawrat and Injil and the beliefs of the Ahl al-Kitab (Jews and Christians) and the explanation of the altercations, battles and wars of the Muslims with the Ahl al-Kitab and the Polytheists .were revealed in Madinah

Also, the verses that speak of the principles of etiquette and the commandments of the religion including the obligatory (wajib) and recommended (mustahab) acts were all revealed in Madinah – meaning after the migration (hijrah) of the Prophet ((blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) from Makkah to Madinah.(١)

Given that the mood in Madinah was one of interaction between the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and the Ansar (the local people of Madinah who welcomed the Prophet and his followers to

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١- Those verses which were revealed to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) during his Hajjatul Wida` or Farewell Hajj (before he passed away) while in Makkah are technically referred to as Madani verses (verses revealed in Madinah) of the Qur'an even though they were not actually sent to him in the city of Madinah. This is so because the condition that is used to judge whether a verse is Madani is if it was revealed after the migration to Madinah. It is by observing this definition that we have given the above classification (in relation to the place of

.(revelation

their city) and other groups that slowly accepted the teachings of Islam, this limited time frame did not permit the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to discuss issues such as condemning idols and idol worshippers (while in Madinah). Therefore we must acknowledge that all the verses of this Surah were .revealed in Madinah

In addition to all of the commentators of the Qur'an being unanimous on this issue (that all of the verses of this Surah were revealed in Madinah) – and it has only been related from Ibn `Abbas that in his opinion, the thirteenth verse of this Surah was revealed in Makkah – the contents of these verses are a living, practical example that .they were all revealed in Madinah

The atmosphere in Makkah was not conducive to discussing these sorts of ethical issues, since the people of Makkah still held doubts concerning the principles of Islam (origin of life and Day of Resurrection), and did not attest to the prophetic mission of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and had not yet .developed faith in his universal message

In such an environment, the opportunity never arose that would allow the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to bring up issues of morality such as .having bad thoughts about others or backbiting other people

Above all of this, those who are being spoken to in this Surah are those that possess true faith

Mu'minun), just as we see that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has started out this) :Surah with the phrase

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

"!O' you who have true faith"

Thus, from this beginning of this Surah until we reach the end, we see that with the exception of one instance, all of the contents of this chapter are addressed to the believers or those who have true faith and this is one indisputable indication that this .Surah was revealed in Madinah

The Disciplines of Islam

point

(Verse ۱)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O' you who have true faith! Do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). And have consciousness of Allah. Unquestionably, Allah .is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing

The purpose of this verse is to establish moral discipline in the principles of Islam within every single person who possesses true faith. This verse serves to create a sense of moral discipline that would prevent the true believer from enacting any sort of precedence or priority in his or her own life over the orders of Allah (Glorified and .(Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

This discipline would also prevent the person from developing any sort of doubt or uncertainty in relation to the orders of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His

.(Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

The spirit and reality of the disciplines of Islam dictate that every individual must take the rules, regulations and convention of laws that he follows, which are related to both the individual and the society, from the Divine Source. In addition, he must thoroughly satiate himself with these laws and must follow the one thought (the laws of Allah) which are much more superior and higher than all other thoughts and .ideologies

Why do we say this? We know that the legislations and Islamic commandments that have to be followed must be brought by one who first and foremost recognizes and understands the human being. Therefore, such a legislator must know all of the .secrets, hidden issues and finer points of the human and his soul

There must not remain a single atom of ambiguity in the life of mankind that a law has not been prescribed for. In addition to this, such a legislator must also be free from all types of sins and errors and there cannot be any type of interest or benefit for him in the society such that this benefit would lead him to formulate laws that suit his own .self

Just as we know, there is not a single person who has these characteristics except for the Creator of the Universe. It is He alone who has complete knowledge of both our inner and outer thoughts. It is He alone who is free from all sin

.and error and who derives no benefit from the society

Therefore, everyone must have true faith in such an Entity and the Islamic disciplines that He sends down. They must not consider their own interests or wishes above that of what has been decided by Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and they must take .inspiration from Him alone

If we give up such Islamic disciplines and solely rely on our wishes and desires to formulate laws and regulations, then the sphere of our lives would resemble an army with multiple leaders. Even if such an army was fully equipped and ready to fight a battle, they would definitely fall into confusion and disorder since they are being led by various leaders and commanders, and after a short period of time, they would fall .to the prowess of the enemy thus being destroyed

The stage that we live our life upon is just like the battle-front and the wishes and desires of each person, each stratum of people or each group are similar to having multiple commanders for an army. If there was to be any difference of opinion within the commanders, then this would lead the people into great conflicts and would drag them into confusion and disorder which would ultimately result in the disregard of .justice amongst one another

Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has explained the necessity of maintaining such a :discipline in this introductory verse where He has mentioned

...لاٌ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

do not..."

give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his ".(progeny

Later on in the seventh verse of this Surah, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) stresses on the infallibility of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and :his inability to fall into error or make a mistake where He says

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِی کَثِــیــرٍ مِّنَ الأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ

Know that the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and" his progeny) is amongst you. Had he yielded to you on many matters, you would have ".definitely been in great trouble

By stating this, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) means to say that since the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) takes all of his information and guidance from the Springs of Revelation and Divine Inspiration, there will never be .even the smallest amount of error in his leadership

However, if the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) were to follow the people - since they may fall prey to the wishes of their own desires - then .whether they know it or not, they would fall into harm and loss

Therefore, if we sincerely wish to be a society of believers and true Muslims, then we :must take the following verse as an example as to how to pattern our lives

...لاٌ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ

وَرَسُولِهِ

do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His... .(Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

Examples in History of Those who have Taken Precedence over Allah and His Prophet

A great number of the faithful believers have followed the primary rule of obeying the One who has legislated the laws for humanity, and if the Islamic verdict was not found for a particular issue, then they would not act upon it nor would they express their .(own opinion (on that issue

However, by exercising and using their own judgement and conclusions, these same people have given precedence to their own desires over those of the Heavenly rulings – the rulings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) – and unknowingly, they did not act upon the verse that :states

...لاَ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His..." Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his ".(progeny

It is possible that sometimes by people acting upon that which is a figment of their own imagination or due to being under the pressures of their environment; they resort to acting on their own thoughts and personal judgements which go against the .laws that have been explicitly mentioned in the religion

Thus, they have given their own ideas the colour of sanctity and placed these above the Heavenly commandments. The problem with the Muslims (of

today) is mostly within this sphere - meaning that we place our own ideas ahead of those of the religion, such that we are not ready to accept the truth and reality for .what it truly is

Even now, we can bring forward examples in which the Muslims are trying to place their own opinions and ideas - which in reality is equivalent to placing their own beliefs above the shining commandments of the religion – above those of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). Sometimes, due to the fear of being classified as open sinners or disbelievers in the faith amongst the people, they hide their opinions (though they still keep such ideas in .(their hearts

Nevertheless, in order to keep this discussion brief, we will only relate a few examples of this act in which Muslims have placed their own thoughts and ideas ahead of those of the teachings of the religion that had occurred in the beginning of Islam. We leave it up to the readers to research and study examples of this attitude that is taking place .in the present day

During the blessed month of Ramadhan in one of the years after the Hijrah to (١ Madinah, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) travelled with a .group of his companions towards Makkah

When they reached the place known as Kara` al-Ghamim, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him

and his progeny) requested a glass of water and between the Salat of Zuhr and `Asr, broke his fast and commanded all of those with him to also break their fast, since Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) had not commanded fasting for those who are travelling.

However, a group of his companions who presumed themselves to be holy people thought that if they were to fast while travelling, they would receive a greater reward. These people thought that they would act according to their own desires and place their wishes above the orders of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and thus remained fasting. This group of Muslims was actually referred to as the group of sinners(۱) by the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)!

The greatest calamity for these people was that at the time of going forward for Jihad (struggle) in the way of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), they had not taken even one glimmer of guidance from the Divine revelations, and thus each one of them proceeded to follow their own commander and leader (which was their own wishes).

۲) During the time of Ignorance (Jahiliyah) of the `Arabs (before the coming of Islam), a man was prohibited from marrying his adopted son's wife after they had divorced. In order to destroy this wrong custom and tradition, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commanded the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and

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۱ - The hadith (narrated in Wasail ash-Shi`a, Volume ۷, Page ۱۲۵) states that the Prophet was quoted as saying about them: سَمَّاهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ عَصَاةً

his progeny) to remove this belief (from amongst the people) and therefore commanded him to marry Zainab, the divorced wife of his adopted son Zaid.

The Prophet proceeded to marry Zainab at which time, a group of those who (apparently) had faith in Islam and who knew very well that the actions and speech of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) are never carried out without reason and who knew that he takes inspiration from the World of Revelation in all of his actions, started to launch criticisms upon him. By employing sarcastic remarks and comments, they began to say that the marriage of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was unlawful!

The motive of these people to start such criticisms was their own cultural thoughts and personal discretion that had been inherited (from the days of Ignorance) and as such, they believed that it was not permitted to marry the ex-wife of one's adopted son.

In order to destroy these types of unfounded criticisms which are rooted in lack of faith in the reality of the Prophetic mission and the illuminating teachings of Islam, the Qur'an brings forth various verses, of which we relate one here from Surah al-Ahzab:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلاَ مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْراً أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلاَلاً مُبِيناً

"And it is not permitted for the believing men nor for the believing women that when Allah

and His Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) decide on an issue that they express their own opinion on this issue (once it has already been decided for them by Allah and His Messenger). And the one who disobeys Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his (progeny) is definitely in manifest error." (۱)

The late Tabrisi (may Allah be pleased with him) has stated that, "The sentence, …do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has a very deep and extensive meaning, that those who have true faith must not take their own opinions above that of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) or the Prophet (blessings of ".(Allah be upon him and his progeny

In reality, that which we have mentioned and explained above is one of the meanings .of the comprehensive meanings of this verse

The True Meaning of Islam is Submission

The true meaning of Islam is the (complete) state of submission to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has defined the :reality of Islam by summarizing it in one sentence where he said

أَلإِسْلاٌمُ هُوَ التَّسْلِيمُ

Al-Islam is (simply) complete submission (to the laws and commandments of" (Allah)"(۲)

Thus, a true Muslim is one who submits entirely to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) – whether it entails benefit or loss for him; if it is according to what

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.Refer to Surah al-Ahzab (۳۳), Verses ۴ and ۵; ۳۶ and ۴۰ -۱

.Nahjul Balagha, Short Saying ۱۲۵ -۲

his own soul desires; or if it goes against his own desires and wishes. Such a person (who is a true Muslim) submits to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) in order to earn His .pleasure

However for those people who do not have such a demeanour within themselves, whenever they see that the religion and the teachings protect their own benefits, then they claim that (part of the) religion. By this we mean that any time they see that the teachings and the wisdom of the faith are in accordance with their internal wishes .and desires, then they defend Islam and the teachings of the religion

However, when it goes against their own benefits, inner desires and passions, then by using various excuses, they devoid themselves of all affinity to the religion. In such people, there is no form of true submission which is the basis and foundation of Islam .just as we will be able to see clearly in the story mentioned below

Tamim ibn Jarasha, along with a group of others representing the tribe of Thaqif were making their way to Madinah and were preparing their tribe for the acceptance of the religion of Islam under the conditions which they had previously decided upon. When they reached the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) he said to them, "Write down your conditions so that I may go over them." They were referred to `Ali (peace be upon him) and requested him to write down

the conditions and instructed `Ali (peace be upon him) to write the following :provisions

The Tribe of Thaqif will accept the religion of Islam if the following conditions are“ met: Giving and taking of interest and performing adultery are permitted and the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) will excuse them from ”.performing the Salat

Ali (peace be upon him) could not bring himself to write such conditions and thus they` were sent to Khalid ibn Sa`id ibn `As. He drew up the contract and thereafter they returned back to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and read the conditions to him. At this point, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) became very upset, and with his own hands, changed what was (written on the paper and then signed it.(۱

Keeping in mind the quote from Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) in relation to what Islam truly is, we see that such people (those of the tribe of Thaqif) were devoid of the true Islam – which is complete submission to the Truth. These people wanted a form of Islam that was conducive to their own lustful desires and one which suited them and if this was not possible, then Islam would hold no .place in their lives

Ibn Hisham has narrated that this group of `Arabs had requested the Prophet - (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that their large idol

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.Ibn Athir, Asad al-Ghabah, Volume ۱, Page ۲۱۶ -۱

Lat – not be destroyed for a period of three years and that the most important .obligatory act of Islam (the Salat) should not be made incumbent upon them

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied to these people that he would not permit – even for one minute – that idols be worshipped and told them that any set of spiritual beliefs which lack the Salat – communication with Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and other acts of servitude – would be like a body without (a soul and this would serve no benefit.(١

Even more amazing than this event was the objection that was raised by some of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to some other companions who had come out of their Ihram and had sexual .relations with their wives

This group of companions (after finishing the rites of the `Umrah) had performed a ghusl (after having sexual relations with their wives) and while the water was dripping from their faces they were addressed by another group of companions: "Do you not have any shame? The Messenger of Allah is still in the state of Ihram and you have come out of your Ihram and (after having relations) have the water of your ghusl "?dripping from your face and head

The Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) heard this being said and got very upset and

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.Sirah ibn Hisham, Volume ۲, Page ۵۴۰ -۱

told his companions, "I myself told them to do this and if I had not brought an animal (to sacrifice with myself, I too would have come out of the Ihram."(1)

The greatest calamity and the most severe blow against the Heavenly teachings is that man - who is a creature and is prone to commit errors – adds and introduces his own ideas and beliefs within the religion, since he is not able to completely replace the teachings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) with his own thoughts.

How many times have we ourselves seen that in our lives, many forbidden acts have later on taken the form of being permitted? How many barriers and limitations (in the religion) have we seen that were brought into effect which were later broken by those same people who introduced them?

All of these types of interventions and interferences with the laws of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) stem from one source and that is that we do not have the correct understanding of the disciplines of Islam and this sentence of the Surah is the true expression of this:

...لاَ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

"...do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)."

In the year that the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) performed the Final Hajj (Hajjatul Wida`), after performing the Sa`i between

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۲, Page ۳۸۶.

the mountains of al-Safa and al-Marwah, he turned towards those who were visiting the house of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and said, "Whoever has not brought a sacrifice along with him should trim his hair or cut his nails a little bit and come out of the Ihram. However, anyone who has brought along an animal to sacrifice just as I have, must stay in the state of Ihram until the sacrifice is given in Mina."

This was something difficult for a group of the companions to accept and their excuse for not listening to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was that it was not agreeable to them that they should come out of the Ihram and those things that were still prohibited for the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) should be permitted for them.

Some of them even said that it is not correct that those who are classified as people who are visiting the House of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) should have the drops of water from a ghusl (due to sexual relations) dripping from their head and face!

The eyes of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) fell on `Umar (ibn al-Khattab) while he was still in the state of Ihram. The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) asked him if he had brought along a sacrifice to which `Umar replied that he had not.

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) then asked him why he had not yet removed his Ihram? To this `Umar replied that, "I am not willing to come out of the Ihram while you are still in the state (of Ihram)." The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied to him, "Not only now, however until the day you die you will always follow this same belief (of disobeying the Prophet)."

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was very upset at the doubts and hesitations of the people and said:

لَوْ كُنْتُ إِسْتَقْبَلْتُ مِنْ أَمْرِى مَّا اسْتَدْبَرْتُ لَفَعَلْتُ كَمَّا أَمَرْتُكُمْ

"If I had given this issue previous thought then just like you, instead of bringing the animal to sacrifice with me, I would have left it at home and would have come to perform the visitation rites of the House of Allah (without the animal). However what can I do now that I have brought this animal to sacrifice, I must act in accordance to the commandment of Allah which states:

حَتَّـّٰى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْىُ مَحِلَّهُ

(You must remain in the state of Ihram) until you reach to the place where you must offer the sacrifice (that you have brought with you).

Thus, I must remain in the state of Ihram until the day of Mina when I can go to the area of sacrifice and slaughter this animal. However, anyone who has not brought an animal with them

to sacrifice must come out of their Ihram and whatever acts they have performed would be considered as their `Umrah and then later on, they can again put on their Ihram for the Hajj."(١)

In this section, we have given four different examples of people who placed their own opinions and views above those of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and the Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). In addition, in the pages of the history of Islam, especially the history of the first three Khulafa (Abu Bakr ibn Al-Quhafah, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and `Uthman ibn al-Affan), we see very distinct examples relating to the topic under discussion which have been discussed in a separate book.(٢)

After writing this section of the commentary, an article(٣) that had been written by one of our friends who had done research on this topic was given to us which (in reality) is a continuation of our discussion (here). Below, we present a summary of what he has mentioned:

"The true meaning of Islam is that when a person is at the crossroads of either following what his religion tells him to do or what own internal desires command him towards, he gives preference to what his religion states since submission in other than this way means that he would be superseding the teachings of the religion with his own desires which is a sign of not having true submission (Islam).

For example, the love and affection that a person shows for another

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ٢١, Page ٣١٩; Late Faidh al-Kashani, Kitab al-Wafi, Volume ٨, Page ٣٢ has explained the words of the Prophet in a different manner.

٢- The renowned Scholar and the great soldier of Islam, the Late Sayyid Sharaf al-Din al-`Amuli has discussed the main points leading to this type of opposition in his work, Al-Nass wa al-Ijtihad.

٣- This article can be found in the Persian Journal entitled Maktab-e-Islami, number ١, Year ٩.

is only indisputable and proved when a disagreement comes up between the two .people at which time, he prefers the opinion of his friend over his own

If in this instance, he prefers his own opinion and gives it precedence, then it is clear that his agreement with his friend in other instances and circumstances was based on ulterior motives and not due to the love and affection that he has for his friend. Rather, it was due to some other sort of (material or spiritual) benefit for himself that he saw in his friendship. In reality, this is explained very well in this verse of the :Qur'an

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ سَبِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا

Those people who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and who intend to create" differences between Allah and His Messengers (by rejecting their message) and say, 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others' and (through this) they intend to find and (follow a middle way Without doubt, such are the disbelievers in the truth."(١)

This verse clearly shows that those who wish to differentiate between the commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) are the true disbelievers and even the smallest amount of faith will never be seen within them. When Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commanded Shaitan to prostrate to Adam (peace be upon him) which he rejected to do, he replied to Allah

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١- Surah al-Nisa (۴), Verse ١٥٠ ١٥١.

:(Glorified and Exalted is He)

لَئِنْ أَعْفَيْتَنِی مِنْ سَجْدَهِ آدَمَ لَأَعْبُدْکَ عِبّادَهً لاٌ یَعْبُدُهٌا أَحَدٌ مِنْ قَبْلِی

If you excuse me from prostrating to Adam then surely I will worship You such)a“ ”.worship(that no one before has ever worshipped You

He was heedless of one fact of reality which was that the true meaning and spirit of worship and devotion is (complete) submission and that which he thought was .worship (` Ibadat) was nothing and it possessed no value whatsoever

Therefore, Islam is like one unit that is connected together such that it can never be separated into individual parts and sections. In actuality, true belief in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He); true belief in the prophetic mission of His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny); true belief in those who are his successors and acting upon the rulings and teachings that they have conveyed are all one compound unit which is made up of various commands. To separate these or split them up from one another in relation to beliefs or practical laws would take one out of true .submission, which makes up the foundation of Islam

On this same foundation, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has classified those who deny the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) as being the same as those who deny Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). The roots of denying the Prophetic mission of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his (progeny

is equivalent to denying Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), as has been mentioned in :the following verse of the Qur’an

فَإِنَّهُمْ لاٰ يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلٰكِنَّ الظّٰالِمِينَ بِآيٰاتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

So then surely they do not deny you (O’ Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him“ (and his progeny), however the oppressors disagree with the signs of Allah.”(1)

If the people were to be submissive in the presence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), then they would not have objected to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him .(and his progeny

By seeing the miracles that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was performing and the sufficient proofs that he had brought, they should .(not have remained at the head of the two roads (of belief and disbelief

However, since Allah, the Greatest, is higher than that He should oppose them (due to their disbelief), in relation to such people, He has accepted their outward act of submission and has mentioned that it is these people (who inwardly deny Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He) however they outwardly show that they deny the ”.Prophets that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has sent

Humility When Speaking

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(Verses ۲ – ۵)

يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاٰ تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوٰاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلاٰ تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمٰالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لاٰ تَشْعُرُونَ. إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوٰاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوىٰ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ. إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنٰادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرٰاءِ الْحُجُرٰاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ

۱- Surah al-An`am (۶), Verse ۳۳.

لاَّ يَعْقِلُونَ. وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْراً لَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

O' you who have true faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet " (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and do not be loud in speaking to him (as you speak to one another) for (if you do this) then all of your (good) deeds will be made devoid of all virtue while you do not realize it. The hearts of those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) are tested by Allah through consciousness (of Allah) - they will have forgiveness and a great reward (given to them by Allah). Unquestionably most of those who call upon you (O' Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) from behind the private chambers (of your house) do not have any understanding. Had these people exercised patience until you (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) had come out (from your house) then it would have been better for them and Allah is All-Forgiving, ".All-Merciful

One of the most important discussions in the science of Akhlaq relates to the method of speaking with people and the way that one interacts with individuals of various classes and strata, and in addition, observing the principles and manners of etiquette .related to other people

There are even some thinkers in the West that

have carried out research projects and studies and have developed ways to influence people. These researchers have written manuals and books in relation to how people should live with others. It is interesting to note that most of the information that these experts have compiled have actually already been explicitly mentioned in the Islamic !narrations

Unfortunately however, our talented writers and scholars do not present the ethical teachings that are found in the Islamic sources in a way that is acceptable to the present day, coupled with practical examples for the younger generation - who are .thirsty to hear these sorts of ethical teachings

Our teachings (on this issue) are not presented as some of the scholars want the people to imagine that this information is based on the initiative (of research) of the Westerners. Rather, the youth should know that in this area of discussion, the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and his successors have .given us a great deal of guidance

The writer and great narrator of hadith, Shaikh Hurr al-`Amuli (may Allah be pleased with him) in his book Wasail ash-Shi`a(۱), has narrated numerous ahadith concerning the responsibility that a Muslim has and the way that he must interact with other people. He has narrated traditions from the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and the Ahlul Bait (peace be upon all of them) under the topic of Etiquette of Social Intercourse while Travelling and at

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.Volume ۷, Page ۳۹۸ – ۶۲۱ -۱

(Home.(1

The method of interaction of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) with others around him is the best guide (for us) and provides us with the greatest assistance in this area of life. Briefly in this section, we present some examples of the behaviour and mode of interaction of the great Prophet of Islam .(blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) with those around him

.He was the first in greeting other people .١

If he wished to speak to a person while in the streets or in a gathering, he would not .٢ speak to them while looking out of the corner of his eyes. Rather, he would turn his entire body in the direction of that person and then speak to him and while speaking, .he always had a smile on his face

If a person made an error while speaking, he would not call him to account for what .٣ .was said

.No one was ever deprived of his good demeanour and etiquette .۴

If any of his companions were not present (at a gathering), then he would . ۵ .immediately ask about that person

He respected people of all classes and ranks such that each and every person that .۶ .met him felt as if he was the most honoured person in the sight of the Prophet

Whenever he was in a gathering, he never chose a specific place to sit, rather, he .٧ .sat in whatever spot was empty

He fulfilled the needs and requests of .٨

The topic of this section of his compilation is "Ahkam al-`Ashrahtu Fis Safar wa al- -١ ".Hadhr

those who came to him and if he was not able to, then he would at least make them pleased with a kind word.

۹. He would bring a special sort of modest, dignity, truthfulness and pleasantness to a gathering and he never raised his voice while speaking.

۱۰. He was tolerant of bad etiquette from those who did not know better and those who were strangers and if someone performed an act that was not in accordance with his nature, the Prophet would not think anything of it.

۱۱. He respected the elders and caressed the young children.

۱۲. He spoke very little and never cut short the speech of anyone else.

۱۳. He never reproached anyone.

۱۴. He stayed away from things that had no worth or value to them and listened attentively to the speech of other people.

In addition to these, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) had many other traits - the most praiseworthy and heavenly characteristics have been mentioned in books on the life of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and the history of Islam.

A Rough, Rude Society

Such a kind, gentle and broad-minded soul (that of the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was enraptured within the hearts of the people who were spiritually and practically distanced from the beneficial ethical traits.

While in the presence of the Noble Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), people saw that he spoke in such a

manner that one would think that they were speaking to a person who walks around .(the city streets and the market place (one who was not a Prophet

In the ninth year of the Hijrah which is known as `Amul Wufud (The Year of the Delegations), various groups and assemblies of people from the tribes that lived around Madinah made their way to the city to accept the teachings of Islam. They would stand at the door of the Prophet's house which was not too far away from the :Masjid (an-Nabi) and at various times of the day would yell out

يَا مُحَمَّدَ أُخْرُجْ!

(O' Muhammad! Come out (of your house)!"(١"

Not only did this act of theirs disturb the resting period of the Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), but in addition, it was also a form of disrespect to this noble personality. It is for this reason that in the four verses under discussion from the Qur'an, such people have been referred to as having little .understanding and being simple minded

Not only was the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) offended by the way that both the strangers and the desert `Arabs who were acquainted with him interacted with him, rather even some of his own close companions did not observe the proper etiquette while they were in his presence and .were speaking to him

:Bukhari, the well-known narrator of hadith of the Ahl as-Sunnah has written

A group of people"

.Nur al-Thaqalain, Volume ٥, Page ٨٠ -١

on behalf of the tribe of Bani Tamim were proceeding to enter the city of Madinah. Separately, Abu Bakr and `Umar selected a person to go and meet the people of the tribe, however a difference arose between the two of them on who should be chosen. This resulted in a quarrel which escalated to yelling and shouting while in the presence of the Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), .which upset him quite a bit

In order that this type of undesired scene would never be played out again while in the presence of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), the second and third verses of Surah al-Hujurat were revealed and these actions were classified as being so heinous, that one's good actions would be completely (removed."(۱

In essence, we must look at why such a form of disrespect while in the presence of the Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) would result in the loss of the reward of one's good deeds? The answer to this question is due to the fact that the honour and respect that is physically manifested and even the way that one speaks while in the presence of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is an indication of the respect that one has deep inside his soul for the .(Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

It

.Al-Taj, Volume ۴, Page ۲۱۳ ۲۱۴ -۱

goes without saying that the method of dealing with others and our actions with them are the outcome of our beliefs and the level of faith that we possess (in our hearts). With this said, when an undesired act is done and attention is not paid to a great personality such as the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), then this shows that deep inside ones' heart, one does not pay attention to the Prophet (Glorified and Exalted is He) or the other noble figures of the religion.

It must be noted that this form of respect is not limited to the period of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) when he was alive, rather, after the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has passed away, he must still be respected.

There is an event in history which took place after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan ibn `Ali al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) where `Ayesha binte Abu Bakr (the wife of the Prophet Muhammad) started to scream and yell while near the grave of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). She started to call upon others to assist her (to prevent the burial of Imam Hasan ibn `Ali, peace be upon him) near his grandfather and thus was successful in her mission. In order to quiet `Ayesha down, Imam Husain ibn `Ali (peace be upon him) recited this verse of the

:Qur'an

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاٌ تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوٌاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ

O' You who have true faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet"
".((Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

:The Imam (peace be upon him) then continued by saying

إِنَّ اللُّهَ حَرَّمَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَمْوٌاتاً مٌا حَرَّمَ مِنْهُمْ أَحْيٌاءً

Certainly Allah has forbidden the believer to act in relation to the deceased in any"
(way which was prohibited to act during his lifetime."(١)

The scholars of the Qur'an have concluded from this verse that this type of respect is not related only to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) – rather, interaction with all of the leaders of Islam: the `Ulama (Scholars), teachers, one's father and mother and in general, all of the elders must also be dealt with in this .same form of respect

This point must especially be noted when one is in the Haram (sanctuary) and the sacred thresholds where these personalities are buried and thus, any sort of yelling or .screaming must not be performed in such places either

The Sin of Making up Rumours

point

(Verse ۶)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جٌاءَكُمْ فٌاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْماً بِجَهٌالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مٌا فَعَلْـتُمْ نٌادِمِينَ

O' you who have true faith! If one who publicly and openly commits sins brings you any news (concerning another person) then ascertain its truthfulness carefully (before you spread it) lest you harm people through (your own) ignorance (through accepting and following false reports) and then

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۱- Nur al-Thaqalain, Volume ۵, Page ۸۰ ۸۱.

.regret what you have done

Making up rumours and lying about others is one of the greatest sins that can occur within a society and sometimes can even place the lives of others in danger. This act can also result in one's honour and dignity being stripped from one – thus paralyzing one's life within a society. How many times has information that has absolutely no foundation, ignited the flames of war between two people resulting in a great loss and ?injury to both sides

In order to prevent such a great injustice from occurring, Islam has commanded the Muslims not to pay attention to just any piece of news or information that comes to .them and not to accept just anything that anyone says to them

Rather, Muslims are only supposed to accept the reports from those people who possess some inner feelings and the fear of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). It is the reports from those people who possess the ethical traits of justice, confidence (of their speech) and reliance (in what the person says) which would prevent a person from making up false reports and lying and relating bits of news and information that .are unfounded and fabricated

In some important issues in relation to religion and the society in which the honour and respect of a person or a group of people is at stake, we have been commanded not to take the word of only one 'just' and truthful person, rather until three other people

who are 'just' and have the fear of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) in them support the statement of the first person, then only are we permitted to accept the statement made by them.

Thus, we must make sure that their statements match exactly with one another in all ways. In other issues that may not be as important as those mentioned above, we have been commanded to make sure that those who are providing the information to us are a minimum of two `Adil (just – from the point of view of the Islamic definition) people.

In order to prove that the words of a person are true in a particular issue (to protect and safeguard the honour of a person or a group of individuals and to prevent any sort of negative outcome from taking place), in addition to the two conditions that were mentioned (the righteousness of the person giving testimony and the number of witnesses that must be present when giving witness to a sensitive societal issue such as adultery or theft) the religion of Islam also lays down conditions for the person who is acting as a witness. If these conditions are not fulfilled, then the person's testimony will not have even the slightest worth or value. Some of these additional conditions include:

١. The witness must have good eyesight and must have vigilance such that with good vision and a powerful memory, he would not add or forget anything about that which he is testifying

.in regards to

Those things which one can differentiate by the senses must be borne witness to .۲ through one of the (five) natural senses. Thus, it is not permitted to base one's testimony on an estimate, guess or assumption and according to the words of the :(Imam (peace be upon him

بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا فَاشْهَدْ أَوْ دَعْ.

Those things which you are required to testify concerning must be – just like the sun" – plain and clear and in other than this event, you do not have the right to spread any ".reports

A person - who without any basis or foundation - gives testimony to an issue .۳ without delay or hesitation (without first confirming the reports) must be whipped and he must also be presented to the people as being one who has given false testimony (so that next time people will not accept what he says.(۱)

These conditions are proof that the religion of Islam - by specifying the prerequisites for the acceptance of any sort of information – is striving to protect the Islamic society from falling into dangers that stem from making up rumours and from evil .forces that formulate lies

Thus, the religion has emphatically commanded its' followers who have true faith that they must carefully review and study any news that comes to them from people who are open sinners or in whom there is a possibility that they have made up reports or lied about an issue. This is done so that the believers do not unknowingly

p: ۶۳

.al-Khilaf (Section of giving Witness), Page ۲۳۵ -۱

.follow a false report and end up causing harm or damage to another person

Liars During the Period of Prophet Muhammad

During the time of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), Walid ibn `Aqbah ibn Abi Mu`it - who belonged to one of the branches of the polluted tree of the Bani Umayyah - was given the authority to go to the tribe of Bani al-Mustaliq and collect the Islamic tax (Zakat) from them and bring it back to .Madinah

When the people of the tribe heard that the representative of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was coming to their village, all of the people rushed out to meet and welcome him into their village. However, since there was some previous enmity that Walid had with this tribe (before the coming of Islam) or because of the incorrect thoughts he had that the tribe was coming to kill him, without going to meet those who were in charge of welcoming him into the city, Walid turned .back from where he had reached and went back to the city of Madinah

He proceeded to report to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that the tribe of Bani al-Mustaliq had rejected the teachings of Islam and were not prepared to pay the Islamic tax and even had the intention of killing him! It goes without saying how dangerous such an incorrect report is and to what extent such information is able to

.cause damage and injury to innocent people

The Muslims of Madinah reached a stage where they were trying to decide what should be done with this tribe (Bani al-Mustaliq). In the meantime, the chiefs of this tribe were informed as to what had transpired and rushed to the presence of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and told him, 'We seek '.refuge in you from the anger of Allah and His Prophet

The Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) who was extremely upset said to them, "Turn back from what you have done and return to the teachings of Islam. If you do not, then we will send someone to put you back in line – that person who is my life and soul" and at this time, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) placed his hand on the shoulder of `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace .(be upon him

The Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) did not stop at that - rather, he secretly dispatched a person to the tribe of Bani al-Mustaliq to watch over how they conduct the affairs of their religion. It was through this person that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) realized that the report that Walid had brought back was a lie since during the time of Salat, they were busy in their `Ibadat and were ready and willing

(to pay their Islamic taxes.(۱

?Who was Walid

Walid was the son of `Aqabah ibn Abi Mu`it and just as it is known, `Aqabah was one of the staunch enemies of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). He was also one of the four people who always used to irritate and annoy (the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)(۲

Aqabah was also the person who showed no shame in throwing garbage at the door` of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and anytime he came face to face with the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), he .would use the most indecent curse words in front of him

In addition, anytime he saw the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) in Sajdah, he would try to harm him violently. His enmity to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) reached to such a level that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) once said: "If I ever see you outside of the precincts of the Haram, I will definitely punish you for all the actions you ".have done to me

Incidentally during the Battle of Badr which happened to be the first war between the .Muslims and the Polytheists, `Aqabah was killed after being captured in the war

Walid was one of the branches of this evil tree (of the Bani Umayyah) and was not too

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.al-Kashhaf, Volume ۳, Page ۱۴۹ -۱

The other three people include: Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab and Hakam ibn al-`As ibn - ۲ .Umayyah

far away from the wickedness of his own root (his father). According to the rulings of the verses of the Qur'an, he was a sinful and unclean person who due to the grudges and past hatred that he had for the tribe of Bani al-Mustaliq, or due to his own carelessness - wanted the blood of the Muslims to be shed. Not only has the Qur'an referred to him as an open sinner in this verse, rather in other verses too he has been :referred to with this same attribute, as it has been mentioned

أَفَمَنْ كٌانَ مُؤْمِناً كَمَنْ كٌانَ فٌاسِقاً لاٌ يَسْتَوُونَ

So then is he who is a true believer similar to the person who is an open sinner –" (never can these two be considered as equal."(1)

A majority of the commentators of the Qur'an if not all of them have said that, "The meaning of a true believer in this verse is Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be (upon him) and the meaning of an open sinner is Walid."(2)

This verse was revealed at a time when the manifestation of true faith and the manifestation of pure debauchery – meaning Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) and Walid (respectively) were boasting about their own selves. Walid spoke proudly (of his family) and was boasting to `Ali (peace be upon him), however `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) considered his true faith and belief in Islam as being his pride and honour

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.Surah al-Sajdah (۳۲), Verse ۸۱ -۱

Hisan ibn Thabit, the poet of the Messenger of Allah (S), wrote the following lines of -۲ poetry in reference to this person: أَنْزَلَ اللٌّهُ وَ الْكِتٌابُ عَزِيزٌ فِى عَلِيٍّ وَ فِى الْوَلِيدِ قُرْآناً فَتَبَوَّاَ الْوَلِيدُ إِذْ ذٌاكَ فٌاسِقاً وَ عَلِــــيٌّ مَبُوءٌ إِيْـمٌاناً

and thus said to Walid, "Be quiet! You are a man whose heart has not yet had true faith enter into it..." It was at this time that the above verse of the Qur'an was revealed about these two personalities.(١)

The inner wickedness and enmity that Walid had did not stop here. It was during the succession of `Uthman ibn al-Affan that the Islamic leadership fell prey to even more divisions and wars and since he (Walid) was the foster brother of the Khalifah of that time, he was appointed as the governor of Kufah. During those days, only those people who were amongst the family of the Khalifah would be appointed to major positions within the government.

The day that Walid entered into the city of Kufah, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud was the head of the public treasury. Walid proceeded to take an exorbitant loan from Ibn Mas`ud in the amount of approximately ٣٠٠,٠٠٠ dinar since even before him, the previous governors of Kufah used to take loans from the public treasury and then later on, pay them back.

Even though the treasurer impressed on him the importance of paying this money back to the public treasury which was repeatedly mentioned, Walid wrote a letter to the Khalifah of the time - who was his foster brother - and asked him to let the person in charge of the public treasury know that he should overlook the money that had been taken. The Khalifah, who was under the influence of the

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١- "Allah has revealed – in the indisputable Book - About `Ali and al-Walid a verse, Through which wickedness has been attributed to al-Walid While faithfulness has been attributed to `Ali." Commentary of Nahjul Balagha, Volume ٢, Page ١٠٣.

love of his brother wrote a letter to `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and said, “You are my treasurer! Do not interfere with Walid!”

The treasurer happened to be a true follower of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and a righteous person and became extremely upset with the actions of the Khalifah and wrote him a reply stating: “I had always assumed that I was the treasurer of the public treasury of the Muslims! Now it is clear to me that I am the treasurer of the Khalifah. I have no need for such a position and from today, I officially tender my resignation.”

Thereafter in a heated speech that he proceeded to give, Ibn Mas`ud informed all of the people of Kufah about what had transpired (between him and the Khalifah).(١)

Walid Performs Four Rak`at of Salat al-Fajr

In addition to being the leader of the region, the Governor was also given the responsibility of being the Imam of the Salat al-Jama`at in the central Masjid. One evening, Walid drank an excessive amount of alcohol and in the state of being intoxicated, went into the Masjid and performed four Rak`at of Salat al-Fajr and in place of the dhikr of the Ruku` and Sujud, he said the following:

أَشْرَبِی وَ أَسْقِــیــنِی

“(O’ the one who loves me) Drink me (the alcohol) and satiate yourself with me!”

In addition, he recited the following poem in a loud voice which showed the burning passion and lust he felt for a woman named Rubab:

عَلِقَ الْقَلْبُ الرَّبَّاباً بَعْدَ مّا

p: ٦٩

١- `Aqd al-Farid, Volume ٢, Page ١٧٢.

شُابَتْ وَ شُاب____اً

“The heart is attracted to Rubab, after it drinks (alcohol) and is drunk.”

After he finished his Salat, he turned towards the people and said, “If you desire, we can add a few more Rak`at to the previous ones that we just performed!”

The state that he was in and because of the excess amount of alcohol that he had drunk, he lost control of his bodily functions and soiled the Masjid, Mihrab(١) and Mimbar(٢) by vomiting everywhere.

When this occurred, Abu Zainab and Jundub ibn Zahir Azdi who were both present in the Salat, took the ring off of the finger of Walid, which he did not notice (since he was drunk) that was used to sign and stamp all of the official letters and books in relation to the government. Along with four noble and respected people from Kufah, `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud went to Madinah to meet the leader and Khalifah of the time (with the ring of Governor (Walid) and complained to him (about the actions of Walid).

They informed the Khalifah of what had transpired however `Uthman did not accept their words and rejected the testimony of these people and in addition, warned them (of their actions)).

These people then went to see `Ayesha bint Abu Bakr who was also involved in the political affairs of Madinah and informed her of the actions of the Governor of Kufah and of the warning that the Khalifah (`Uthman) had given them. She went out amongst the people and

p: ٧٠

١- The place where the Imam of the Salat al-Jama`ah stands to lead the congregation – usually semi-circle in shape.

٢- The pulpit upon which the orator would stand or sit upon to deliver a lecture.

proclaimed that: "`Uthman has stopped meting out the punishments ordained by Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and has also warned these people who have come to him bearing witness (of crimes being committed by his Governor)" however this act .as well did not solve the problem

This group of Muslims then went to Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) and complained to him about what had transpired. `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) met with `Uthman and said to him, "Why have you stopped meting out the punishments ordained by Allah and have instead warned these people who have ?(witnessed (a crime

Have you forgotten the admonition that `Umar gave to you when he said, 'Do not make the Bani Umayyah and the children of Abi Mu`it preside over the people! O' `Uthman! It is incumbent upon you to remove this person from the governorship of Kufah and you must not appoint him to any other religious position. You need to investigate into the testimony of these witnesses. If they are people of faith, then summon Walid from Kufah and apply the punishment that Allah has designated for ".those who drink wine

The pressures of the common people reached to such a level that `Uthman was forced to summon his governor from Kufah and (after investigating) was finally ready to impose the Islamic penalty upon him – meaning that he was ready to lash him ٨٠ times. However, not a single person had the courage

to whip the brother of the Khalifah. Whoever went close to Walid (to try to hit him) .would be warned by Walid of his close family ties to the `Uthman

It was at this time that Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) himself took the whip and with the full power and strength that he had, whipped Walid ٨٠ times on his body; and according to some of the ahadith, `Abdullah bin Ja`far was the (one who whipped Walid by the command of `Ali (peace be upon him).(١

Rumour Mongering in Our Time

The printing and publishing industry is one of the most valuable gifts of the industrial era. In addition to alleviating the high cost of printing, it is through the blessing of this industry that mankind has been able to print and spread the sciences and various branches of knowledge throughout the world in a very short time span. Unfortunately however, this industry has also struck a blow to humanity through the spreading of lies and rumours which has enabled it to make a profit through untruths and .dishonesty via the printing of deception

Today, the spreading of rumours, fabrication of lies, levelling accusations and other inappropriate things upon others, is one of the most active missions of the Western press. However we cannot say that all of the publications that come from the West are inflicted with this societal disease, because not being careful and observing precaution and negligently narrating reports to some newspapers and magazines has also been

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١- Ansab al-Ashraf, Volume ۴, Page ٢٣; Sahih al-Muslim, Volume ٢, Page ۵٢.

.unintentionally done by us (the Muslims) as well

How many people have lost their honour and respect through the negligent reporting and printing of wrong reports? Even after apologizing and making amends later on, this wrong can never be made right. How many times have we seen the esteem and honour of a group of people fall victim due to the lack of communication between the ?various news reporters

Today is the day that we must say: "The print media must take the pen away from those people who feel that they are free to write whatever they wish to write and feel ".that they can attribute whatever they wish to attribute to whoever they wish

Thus, the fourth article in the Constitution (of Iran) which can lead to the (spiritual) illumination of the minds and thoughts of a nation must be saved and liberated from those authors who either write for no purpose, for a hidden benefit or for some .personal gain

Immunity from Sin and Error

point

(Verses ۷ – ۸)

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ. فَضْلاً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

O' Believers!) Know that surely the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad, blessings of) " Allah be upon him and his progeny) is among you. Had he (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) obeyed you (took your advice and acted upon it) on many occasions, then

you would have been in great trouble now. However, Allah has endeared the faith to you and He has made it attractive to your hearts and He has made disbelief, evil deeds and disobedience hateful to you. Such people (those who have faith and keep away from evil traits) are those who are rightly guided. This blessing (of faith) is a ”.favour and blessing from Allah and Allah is the All-Knowing, All-Wise

The goal of these two verses of the Qur’an is to inform those who have true faith of two major ethical points. The first point is that that the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is free from committing sins or errors and thus all of his orders and commands must be carried out completely. We are commanded to follow him and he is not required to follow us. The second point is that each and every .person has innate ethical traits and qualities instilled within him

Seeing as to how both of these issues carry their own significance and importance, we .will discuss each of them individually

Is there any level or status (that one can have in a society) that is greater and which holds more of a responsibility than leadership (of that community)? Is it possible for a person who lacks both the spiritual and physical qualifications to fulfil the task and responsibilities of a leader? What about the person who cannot even fulfil the role of a leader in matters related to

?one's own life – how can he be a leader of the people

Is it possible for a political leader who only leads the people in matters of politics; or those who are experts in the matters of economics and who are in charge of the economic and business affairs of the entire country be placed in these positions if they do not possess a series of moral and ethical values that would permit them to occupy such important positions? Can such people be placed within the framework of ?the political and economic affairs of a community

The divinely appointed Messengers are true leaders of the people in all matters of their lives and thus they must possess the noble and grand qualities which would reflect their competence in the mission of leading the people and which would give the people a reason to follow them. Thus, we can summarize the traits and qualities :that the Messengers of Allah must possess as follows

Comprehensive knowledge and understanding. By this we mean that the Prophets .١ of Allah must have complete and precise knowledge in relation to all matters that they have been commanded to convey to the people, such that not a single ruling from amongst the rulings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) should be hidden or concealed from them. In addition, there should also be no question asked to them in .relation to the religion that they would not be able to answer

They must be protected from committing .٢

sins and going against the commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) at all times in their lives – whether this be before their official appointment or after their .(official appointment (to the station of Prophethood

They must be protected from committing any sort of mistake or error in relation to .۳ .the propagation of the religion and the application of its' practical rulings

They must be purified from all sorts of negative spiritual traits and physical defects .۴ which (if they possessed) may lead the people to develop an aversion and dislike for them. This would make the people keep their distance from them which would in turn lead to the Prophets and Messengers not being successful in their mission of .conveying the message (of Allah) to the people

In order to stress the importance of each of these points, the scholars of Islam and the specialists in Theology have gathered clear proofs and evidence(۱) of which, to .keep this discussion concise, we do not mention here

Do not such distinctions (of these personalities) necessitate that in relation to matters of the religion, we must follow them and that we should never anticipate or expect that these Divinely sent teachers - since they have been granted `Ismat (protection from committing errors or sins) and are free from all errors and slips in relation to the Divine Commandments and leadership - would ever follow any incomplete and ?imperfect ideas and opinions

A person who desires that the Heavenly teachings and Divinely appointed leaders

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In discussing the importance of each of these traits, we have written a book - ۱ entitled, "Universal Message of the Prophets" in which we have discussed these points .in detail. Please refer to this book for more information

should follow their own personal thoughts and desires and who feels that the wheel of the religious teachings should revolve around their own opinions, is lacking a correct understanding of the Prophets and the status and rank of the Messengers, and has .definitely not kept in mind the infallibility of these personalities

:In the verse of the Qur'an under discussion, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) says

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ

O' Believers!) You should know that surely the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad,)" blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is amongst you. Had he (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) obeyed you (took your advice and ".acted upon it) on many occasions, then you would have been in great trouble now

The person who wishes to take precedence over Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and wants to place his own thoughts and ideas ahead of those of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has been reminded that since he has been given a Prophet that is free from sins and committing any sort of error, one must not place his own .(desires and ideas ahead of the revelation of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He

In summary (you will recall that), in the beginning of this Surah, Allah (Glorified and :Exalted is He) addressed the believers by saying

لاٌ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ

اللَّهِ وَ رَسُولِهِ

do not give preference (to your own words and deeds) above those of Allah and His..." Messenger (the Prophet Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny)."

Continuing on in the verse under discussion, we have been commanded not to give preference to our own ideas in relation to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) since he is a man who has been protected from all types of errors and sins and because of this, we must follow him.

In addition, it must be mentioned that this part of the verse relates to issues of the Islamic legislation and thus the thoughts of the common people cannot be accepted and followed (over the rulings of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He). Therefore, we must take inspiration from the revelation of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and just because the people may feel offended or insulted is no reason that the commands of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) should be changed.

An Infallible Prophet and the Subject of Asking Advice

Yes, in those issues related to the society and community which were not (directly) associated to the religion or Divine revelation that even the common people were able to differentiate between the truth and falsehood (in them), the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was commanded to ask advice from those around him. Thus, through asking advice from the common people, problems and difficulties can be solved.

It has been mentioned in the Qur'an that:

فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ

لَهُمْ وَ شٰاوِرْهُمْ فِى الأَمْرِ فَإِذٰا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلى اللّٰهِ

So then (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) forgive the“ people their slips and errors and seek forgiveness from Allah for them all and consult and seek council from them in matters (not relating to the religion or the teachings of Allah). So then when you are ready to make a decision (based on the advice of the others), then have trust in Allah (put a collective decision into practice).”۳۴

In addition, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) testifies that one of the signs of a person with true faith is that he asks for advice from others in relation to performing a certain :task

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجٰابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَ أَقٰامُوا الصَّلاٰةَ وَ أَمْرُهُمْ شُورى بَيْنَهُمْ وَ مِـمّٰا رَزَقْنٰاهُمْ يُنْـفِقُونَ

And as for those people (who are believers) and who answer the call of their Lord“ (Allah) and uphold the Salat and conduct their affairs through consultation with one (another and (these are the people) who give out of their wealth (to the needy).”(۱)

By the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) asking for advice as the very first step (in carrying out any task), this truly sets an example for others, that in matters relating to the society and community, we should not appear as despotic or authoritarian - rather we must give respect to the opinions of other people and ask for help and assistance through soliciting their opinions. Yes, the part of the

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.Surah al-Shuara’ (۴۲), Verse ۳۸ -۱

:verse that says

فَإِذا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلى اللّهِ

So then when you are ready to make a decision (based on the advice of the others),“ ”.(then have trust in Allah (put a collective decision into practice

shows us that the first stage that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) would traverse was that of seeking advise, and then at the conclusion, the .final decision would be left to him alone

All of the democratic societies and free governments of the world resort to asking others in the society for advice in deciding how to solve their problems, however at the same time they still have one leader who, after taking advice from others, makes his final decision. To an extent, asking advice from others helps remove the curtains and veils (that a person may have) and gives the person a proper outlook of events. However in the end, it is necessary for the person who will make the final decision to .weigh the various opinions and then make one ultimate resolution

Some people think that: “The only outcome that can come from asking others for advice is that difficulties will be prolonged and a group of people who do not possess one definitive leader and who instead resort to consultation and asking the general population for advice, cannot bring an issue or affair to closure once it has been ”.started without a stoppage of work

However, the above quoted verse of the Qur’an goes against this opinion and conveys

the fact and bears witness that a difference of opinion and diversity of beliefs actually leads to a standstill and stoppage of work. Thus in the end, it is incumbent that after the leader or person in charge has asked others for advice, he gives his own decisive .judgment

Due to this fact, after Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commands the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to seek council from other people, He :(Glorified and Exalted is He) then states

فَإِذٰا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ

So then when you are ready to make a decision (based on the advice of the others),“ ”.(then have trust in Allah (put a collective decision into practice

The life of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) clearly shows us to what level he respected the opinions of his companions. Even though the true face and reality of the actions was made known to the mirror of his heart (through Divine Inspiration) and he was completely aware of both the good and bad that would come out of every act, more so than others knew, still in many complex issues he would form a committee and ask his companions for their opinions :and judgements. Take for example the following cases

Before the Prophet went face to face on the battlefield of Badr with the armies of .۱ the Quraish, he formed a committee comprised of the Muhajirin and the Ansar and asked them for their

advice in relation to the battle against the polytheists, which the companions saw as an uninhibited opportunity for them to expound their various beliefs. The Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) accepted and followed the opinions of the people and marched with his soldiers towards Badr.(١)

٢. When the news reached the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) while in Madinah that the forces of the Quraish - who had lost many people during the battle of Badr - were coming to exact revenge on those that were killed (thus, starting the war of Uhud), he examined the situation by asking what the method of defence of the Muslims should be and if they should stay in the city or if they should all leave and fight the war outside (of the city). When the youth from amongst the Ansar suggested that they go out of the city of Madinah to fight the battle, he acted upon their suggestion.(٢)

٣. During the battle of Ahzab in which the forces of idolatry congregated like locusts from all parts of `Arabia and were making their way to Madinah to destroy the young religion of Islam, in his own particular way of fighting against this onslaught, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) took the opinion of a great Iranian personality and put his ideas into practice.

It was Salman al-Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) who suggested

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١- Sirah Ibn Hisham, Volume ١, Page ۶١۴.

٢- Ibid., Volume ٢, Page ۶٣.

that those areas of Madinah which could be easily infiltrated should be fortified with a three metre deep trench and throughout the whole length of this ditch, rifle-pits should be placed separated by a small distance. This was suggested so that any time the valiant fighters from amongst the polytheists desired to fill the trench (to make their way across) or attempt to cross over the trench (on their horses), the soldiers of Islam would be able to catapult rocks and stones to push back the approaching soldiers.(١)

۴. When trying to take over the fortified stronghold of the Jews in Khaibar, we see that the area where the soldiers of Islam invaded from, by following the orders of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was completely unthought-of of by the enemies (and thus, it caught them off guard).

One of the experienced warriors of Islam by the name of Habib ibn Mandhar who had in-depth knowledge of the area of Khaibar went to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and said to him, "Anytime the command comes from Allah to attack this area, I will not have even the smallest thing to say about it. However if this is an issue in which I am permitted to offer my advice, then I would say that I do not think this is a good place to choose as the base to keep the soldiers in, because this area is accessible to

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١- Sirah al-Halabi, Volume ٢, Page ٣٣١.

the enemies and is very close to the Fortress of Nistat. The archers from that Fortress will be able to hit our troops easily since there are no date trees or houses that would ".block their view

:The Qur'anic principle that states

وَ شٌاوِرْهُمْ فِی الأَمْرِ...

".So then consult with them (O' Prophet) in your affairs"

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) said that, "If in a particular issue, you are able to bring forth a better point, then we will choose that ".place as the area to travel towards

It is because of this discussion that took place and after studying the fortress of Khaibar, that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) chose an (area for his base that was behind the date trees.(١

An Internal Messenger: The Ethical Conscience

point

(Verse ٧)

..وَلٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الإِی_مٌانَ وَزَیَّ_نَهُ فِی قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيٌانَ أُوْلٌئِكَ هُمُ الرٌّاشِدُونَ

However Allah has made true belief something that is loved by you and He has made" it alluring to your hearts and He has made disbelief (Kufr), evil deeds and disobedience hateful to you. Such people (those who have true faith and keep away ".from these evil traits) are those who are rightly guided

Those traits that a person recognizes as good and bad within his own self which he is able to discern without being taught and are also a part of the issues of human nature, are referred to as the ethical conscious or the ethics of

.Ibid., Volume ٣, Page ٣٩ -١

.human nature

However, there are traits engrained deep within the nature of mankind whose goodness and badness (of the particular trait) cannot be discerned simply through human nature. Rather, these qualities stem from the Divine, Heavenly teachings or from the teachers of the religion (the Prophets and Messengers) and are known as .ethical traits which are not innate – and thus, it is these which must be learnt

Amongst all nations and peoples around the world - oppression, tyranny and marriage with ones' immediate family members are all despicable and appalling acts – although oppression is a trait that mankind intrinsically knows is bad - however the despicability of marrying ones' family members is recognized (only) through the .teachings of the Divine religions

In order to differentiate between the teachings which form a part of our nature and those which do not, there are methods and formulas which when put into practice, :enable us to discern these two types of knowledge

Those traits which are innate are not limited to a particular class or race of people .۱ .and it is not necessary for a person to refer to someone else to learn these things

Seeing as to how the innate ability is ones' own guide and leader, thus geographical, .۲ economic, political and instructional factors do not play any role in attracting a .person's attention to these things

Any sort of propaganda or teachings that try to go against the innate traits - even if .۳ they try to destroy the growth and development

of them - can never destroy the roots of those traits which are instilled deep within a (person.(١

The Qur’an clearly announces that: Within the heart of a person, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has placed the traits of inclination (to Him), love and adoration for the true faith, and love for Allah - the Creator of all the Worlds – and has made mankind love Him. He has also made disbelief and disobedience as hated and detested traits :(within a person) when He (Glorified and Exalted is He) said

وَلْكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الإِي_مَّانَ وَ زَيَّ_نَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَ كَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَ الْفُ_سُوقَ وَ الْعِصْيَانَ

However Allah has made true belief something that is loved by you and He has made“ it alluring to your hearts and He (Allah) has made disbelief (Kufr), evil deeds and ”.disobedience hateful to you

Therefore, not only has Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) blessed us with a cognizance of His self and moulded us with the belief of having an origin, rather He has also decorated our hearts with the respectable, up-right traits that can be discerned without a teacher or instructor and these have been engrained deep within all of us. This is the wider meaning that we are able to comprehend from the :sentence

...حَ_بَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الإِي_مَّانَ...

”... has made true belief something that is loved by you...“

In the second part of this verse, in addition to making us detest disbelief (Kufr), it has also been mentioned that the hatred for sins

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١ - For a deeper explanation in reference to how we can discern the innate traits, please refer to the book The Time of Returning back to True Faith, written by .Ayatullah Ja`far Subhani

and transgressions are traits which have been built-in to all of us as well. Therefore, the meaning of making true faith loved and cherished by us is not simply related to the cognizance (Ma`rifah) and recognition of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). Rather in addition to this, our intrinsic nature has also been taught a series of ethical traits and unknowingly, our soul is attracted and pulled towards these qualities.

At this point, we refer to some of the traits that are a part of man's innate disposition, which can been seen from the clear verses of the Qur'an: Cognizance of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and recognition of the starting point of creation and end (of life); the recognition of the world of creation and realizing that there is a Fashioner for all of these amazing things. These are all things so engrained in our natural disposition that mankind has been moulded and fashioned to search and find the answers to these.

Going past the need to search out Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), we come to issues such as the love and attraction that people feel towards the noble ethical traits which have also been infused into our creation. In addition, the desire towards good things and the abhorrence of bad things are also rooted in our innate disposition.

We cannot find a single nation throughout the world which would consider it good to keep something (for ones' self) that one has retained in trust for another

person or who would think that to act treacherously in regards to a responsibility that .one was given is a noble trait

Similarly, we cannot find people who would consider it despicable to keep ones' promises and feel that it is good to break ones' pledge or guarantee. If a father makes a promise to his child to carry out a certain act and he does not live up to it, then he will definitely be reproached by his child. It is through the innate natural disposition that the child possesses that he can see nothing else except that one must .fulfil and live up to his promises

It has been written on the innate natural heart by the Pen of Creation (of Allah) on every single person that one must always speak the truth and other than speaking the truth, a young child knows nothing else. Thus, it is a part of a person's make-up .that he is given a pure heart and the characteristic of modesty

This is true even for those women who are drowned in sin that at the first instance of them committing a lewd act, they immediately try to bring back a sense of chastity .and purity back into their lives

In addition, when people want to distribute and allocate wealth which has been plundered from other people, they strive to be just and to show equality in their action of distribution and even at this time, they know and realize that to be

unjust in the distribution of this wealth is not right (even though they themselves have stolen the wealth from others).

All of these commonly known innate principles are known and taught to all of humanity through their primary school known as creation. The mechanism of creation has placed all of these traits of perfection within the deep valleys of the person. The Noble Qur'an clearly states this truth in the most complete way in various chapters, such as where it is mentioned:

وَ نَفْسٍ وَ مٌا سَوٌّيهٌا فَأَلْهَمَهٌا فُجُورَهٌا وَ تَقْوٌيهٌا

"(I swear) by the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right (deeds)."(1)

وَ هَدَيْنٌاهُ النَّجْدَينِ

"And We have shown him (the human being) the two paths (of right and wrong action)."(2)

إِنٌّا خَلَقْنٌا الإِنْسٌانَ مِنْ نُطْفَهٍ أَمْشٌاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنٌاهُ سَمِيعاً بَصِيراً

"Verily We created man from a drop of mingled sperm in order to test him. Thus, We have given him hearing and sight."(3)

Not only has Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) placed the love for the good traits deep within the hearts of mankind and has made him feel averse to bad, wicked deeds, rather He has also given mankind a soul that punishes its' self when the person goes beyond the limits (set for ones' self). It is this soul that reprimands and scolds the person in the worst possible way, just as Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has said:

لاٌ أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيٌامَهِ وَ لاٌ أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوٌّامَهِ

1- Surah al-Shams (٩١), Verse ٧-٨.

2- Surah al-Balad (٩٠), Verse ١٠.

.Surah al-Insan (٧۶), Verse ٢ -٣

(I swear by the Resurrection Day and I swear by the self-reproaching spirit."(1)"

4. While explaining the continuous struggles of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) – the idol destroyer – there is a short verse of the Qur'an in which an allusion is made to the (innate) intelligence of humanity. In this story, the event in which Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was brought in front of the court in order to put him on trial (for destroying the idols) has been mentioned.

In summary, the event goes as follows: Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had proceeded to destroy the idols in the temple one after the other, and then using these broken idols, made a hill in the middle of the temple. When he was finished, he took the hammer (used to break the idols) and placed it beside the largest idol of the temple (which he did not break) and then left.

Upon the people's return (from out of the city), and seeing what had happened, it was clear to the elders of the community, based on his previous habits, that the one who had destroyed their idols was none other than Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). Thus, they summoned Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) to the court and while in the presence of others, made him bear testimony to this act. When they asked him to explain what had happened in their idol worshipping temple, he said to them, "Ask this large idol what

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1- Surah al-Qiyamat (75), Verses 1-2.

".happened

At this time, those who had gathered to hear what had occurred were placed in a baffling dead end since if they were to say that the large idol did not have the ability to perceive things or have any intelligence, then they would have taken the side of Ibrahim (who believed that) it is not possible to worship something that cannot understand or perceive things. If they were to say that the idol has intelligence and can speak, then Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) could reply, "Then why are you "?!asking me what happened – ask the idol

At this point in time, the obscured instincts of these people was aroused and they looked at one another and said to Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) that, "You are the oppressor and transgressor." The Noble Qur'an presents this event concerning Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his attempts to destroy the wrong thoughts :of his people in the following manner

فَرَّاجَعُوا إِلَـى أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْـتُمُ الظَّالِـــمُونَ ثُمَّ نُكِسُوا عَلى رُؤُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ

So then they turned (in thought) back to themselves and said, 'Surely you are the" ones who are doing wrong deeds.' They then confounded with shame (and (said), 'You know full well that these (idols) do not speak!"(١)

In addition there is also mention of one's ethical consciousness in the Islamic ahadith. :For example, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said

إِنَّهُ مَنْ لَمْ يُعْنَ عَلى نَفْسِهِ حَتّى

.Surah al-Anbiya' (٢١), Verse ٦۴ ٦٥ -١

يَكُونَ لَهُ مِنْهَا وَّاعِظٌ وَزَّاجِرٌ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ مِنْ غَيْرِهَا زَّاجِرٌ وَ لاٌ وَّاعِظٌ

The person who does not have the ability within his own soul to advise and warn“ himself (from keeping away from bad things) will never receive benefit from another person who tries to advise and council him (on these issues) and others who try to (council him will have no effect whatsoever.”(١

This sort of natural and universal perception cannot bring about forbidden acts within the society, nor can it lead to a person placing his own wishes and desires above that .of the religion

Freud and the Ethical Consciousness

Freud, the well-known psychologist, denied the existence of all sorts of inherent perceptions and collectively considered all of these as stemming from the societal forbidden acts and the effects from the societal inclinations and dispositions, and thus .rejected and discarded all of them

He was of the belief that just as the reigns of a horse help to control the unruliness and naturally make the horse submissive and tame, so too during the course of time, the rules and prohibited moral traits of a society reached to the stage of being the reigns for the control of humanity such that in relation to various issues, one is controlled and tamed and thus, deep down in one's soul, in the light of these rules, the .issue of the ethical conscious would take form

The ethical conscious is nothing more than the reigns that control society. The ethical“ conscious does not represent an inherent act or something that

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١ - Nahjul Balagha, Khutbah ٧٨ (The word in this hadith يعن, is based on the passive voice verb in the meaning of a person who is not assisted from Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) such that he would be able to remove the negative traits from within his (.own soul

is deeply rooted in the soul of mankind. Rather, it is the simple outward approach of the acts that are forbidden within a society."(1)

However, the view of Freud in relation to some of the good and bad ethical traits that mankind has learned from the leaders and elders who have lived in this world was correct.

Without doubt, the marrying of one's close family members is something that all religious beliefs have classified as being repulsive. However as for those good and bad ethical qualities that are universally agreed upon by all people over the entire Earth which even those people who are far removed from cultured nations and the teachings of the Prophets and those who live in the furthest points of the world and accept the goodness and badness of such acts – can never be thought of as ethical traits that one learns and acquires and is not born with!

It is here that the truth of the verse under discussion becomes absolutely clear when the human being acknowledges that without doubt, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has made our souls have true faith and purity (within them) and has created our intellects with an aversion to bad and immoral acts:

...حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الإِى_مٌانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيٌانَ...

"...He has endeared the faith to you and He has made it attractive to your hearts and He has made disbelief (Kufr), evil deeds and disobedience hateful to you..."

An Everlasting Peace Treaty

point

(Verse ۹)

وَإِنْ طٌائِفَتٌانِ مِنَ

1- From the book, What do I know : The Sicknesses of the Soul, Page ۶۴.

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

And if two factions from amongst the believers begin fighting against one another,“ then restore peace between them both. However, if one party revolts against the other party, then fight the revolting party until they submit to the command of Allah. When they do so, then restore the peace that was between them with justice and act with equality (between the parties involved). Surely Allah loves those people who act ”.with equality

Peace and harmony, whose basis is founded upon justice and fairness is one of the benefits of the teachings of the moral ethics and is also one of the rulings (that must be enacted) in an Islamic society. However true peace is one in which the interests of the opposing parties who are belligerent towards one another is brought forth in the .correct manner

It is peace and harmony which is upheld by people of true faith and who possess cognizance of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and if one of the two sides who are within the sphere of justice and fairness were to step out and go beyond the boundaries, then with whatever force and power is available, they would be stopped. The forces would be mustered up to fight against the aggressive party so that they .return back to the path of truth

In order to make such a

:peace agreement permanent and stable, Islam has laid down certain conditions

Any sort of peace treaty or agreement to refrain from aggression and hostility must .١ be based upon justice and fair dealings and if one party is more powerful than the other side, then they must not use their power to impose their wishes and desires on .the party who is weaker

It has been said in the past that, "True peace between a powerful (nation) and a weaker one can never be conceivable" and this is definitely the truth and thus, the :Qur'an has told us that

فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَ أَقْسِطُوا...

then restore the peace that was between them with justice and act with equality..." ".((between the parties involved

Those who possess true faith and genuinely recognize Allah (Glorified and Exalted is .٢ He) and who do not stand to profit from the disagreement must be the ones who .oversee the peace treaty

Anytime one of the two parties thinks about expansion (of their area or land) and try .٣ to take steps that go against the peace treaty, then those who are the arbitrators and the neutral party involved must inform the aggressive party about the outcomes or effects of them starting a war. This must be done so that the person who wishes to oppress others and go against the laws of Islam would know that there is no room in an Islamic society for such people and these two fundamental conditions are found in the Qur'an in the

:following verse

فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدٌهُمٌا عَلی الأُخْری فَقٌاتِلُوا الَّتِی تَبْغِی...

However, if one party revolts against the other party, then fight the revolting party“ ”...until they submit

Fighting against the oppressing party must not take on the form of revenge or .۴ retribution. Rather, any form of opposition to the oppressor must be due to the fact that he has gone against the laws of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), and one must try to remove the thoughts from his head in which he feels that he is able to violate and encroach upon the rights of the believers, and this can be deduced from the :section of this verse that states

...حَتٌّی تَفِیءَ إِل_ی أَمْرِ اللٌّهِ

”.until they submit to the command of Allah...“

Thus, opposition to oppression must continue until the oppressor returns back to the path of justice and fairness – which in essence are the commandments of Allah .(Glorified and Exalted is He) – as have been mentioned in this verse

At the end of this verse, we have been reminded of an important point which is that .۵ those people who have true faith must constantly strive to make sure peace is attained and any wars that take place must not make them hopeless or discouraged of trying to attain peace. This must be realized and carried out even to the point that after the oppressors have subjugated a group of people, we must still keep our spirits high and try to formalize a new peace treaty that is

:based upon justice, just as it has been mentioned in the verse

فَإِنْ فٰائَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمٰا بِالْعَدْلِ وَ أَقْسِطُوا...

When they do so, then restore the peace that was between them (the parties“ ”...(involved) with justice and equality

Such a peace treaty and agreement that is founded on the above mentioned conditions is a true peace agreement that Islam has laid down and enjoined upon the .belligerent parties at war

If the above mentioned conditions were to be carried out, then in addition to being able to safeguard the interests of both parties, we would also be able to cover the entire world with the clothing of a peaceful life – which is the greatest wish and longing for the people of the entire world. This is the peace that Islam has proposed .and the conditions that it has given to attain and maintain such a state

Let us take a look at the peace treaties that both the major and minor nations of the world have signed and ratified in the past - which of these agreements are truly just? Is a peace treaty that is drawn up between two aggressive parties ever equitable, or ?is it ever imaginable that peace between a powerful and a weak nation is attainable

Are the councils that oversee the peace treaties impartial or are they completely free of any benefit or profit in their arbitration, problem solving and settling of a dispute and enmity? Are the aggressive parties made known of the peace treaties, agreements

and settlements (that are imposed upon them) by the major powers of the world ?before they sign and enact them

The political commentators of the world are all in agreement and have stated that, "Establishing peace in any part of the world will never be accepted except with complete agreement of the world powers and the dominating super powers of the world. Even the establishment of peace in the Middle East will only become possible when two camps – from both the East and the West – are in agreement of such a ".peace

Therefore, such an imposed peace which is far from being achieved will never yield positive results and an everlasting and perpetual peace will in no way be realized or .established

Struggling for Peace

Peace is one of the goals and ethical values of the religion of Islam and is one of the most important obligatory acts of the religion (for the believers) which must be enacted with the conditions mentioned above. It does not make any difference if the peace agreement which is trying to be reached is between two Muslims, two groups of people or two major nations. In any event, it is incumbent on every Muslim that in .the minimum, he must strive and struggle to make sure peace is established

In the war of Hudaybiah, the Messenger of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) displayed an amazing self-sacrifice in establishing peace between the Muslims and the Polytheists. He was willing to order some of his

companions to return back to Makkah [to live amongst the Polytheists just as they (the people of Makkah) had wished] just to make sure the peace treaty could be ratified. (We have gone into detail on this issue in our book, Furugh Abadiyyat).(١)

Elaborating on the importance of peace and friendship between two opposing parties, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), has said the following:

وَ صَلاَحُ ذَاتَ بَيْنَكُمْ فَإِنِّى سَمِعْتُ جَدَّكُمَا يَقُولُ: صَلاَحُ ذَاتَ الْبَيْنِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ عَامَّةِ الصَّلاَةِ وَ الصِّيَامِ

"I advise you (my two sons – al-Hasan and al-Husain) to establish and foster peace amongst two opposing parties, since surely I have heard your grandfather (the Messenger of Allah, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) say, 'Establishing peace between two opposing parties is better than praying and fasting for the entire year."(٢)

The commandment of establishing peace is so important in the view of Islam that the person who is trying to make peace (between two parties) is permitted to use any logical means at his disposal and he is even permitted to lie to the opposing parties to bring about this peace!(٣)

Standing up to an Oppressor

Without doubt, standing up to an oppressor is one of the sacred primary teachings of Islam. Principally, a majority of the Heavenly Prophets came from families who lived under the oppression and domination of tyrants.

In addition, there are very few Surah's of the Qur'an in which the names and punishments of the tyrants is not mentioned (either directly or indirectly) and

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١ - Volume ٢, Page ٥٨٠-٦٠٣ (Third Printing); this can also be read in the English translation of the mentioned book entitled, The Message, published by Islamic Seminary Publications of Karachi, Pakistan, reprinted by Ansariyan Publications (Refer to Page ٥١٨ – ٥٣٩).

۲- Nahjul Balagha, Volume ۳, Page ۸۵ (Advice from Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, to his children).

۳- al-Makasib al-Muharramah, Discussion on the Prohibition of Lying.

even in the verse under discussion, the Islamic society has been commanded to fight against tyrants and oppressors until they return back to the straight path and open the doors to the commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). It is said in this :verse

...فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِی تَبْغِی حَتَّـی تَفِیءَ إِلَـی أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

".then fight the revolting party until they submit to the command of Allah..."

In another place in the Qur'an, we are cautioned that no Muslim is permitted to take :an oppressor as a protector; it has been mentioned

وَ لاَ تَرْکَنُوا إِلَـی الَّذِینَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّکُمُ النَّارُ

And do not incline towards those people who are oppressive and do wrong or the fire" will seize you."۵۱

The noble leader of the Shi`a world, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said, "Many times the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him :and his progeny) said

لَنْ تُقَدَّسَ أُمَّهٌ لاَ یُؤْخَذُ لِلضَّعِیفِ فِیهَا حَقُّهُ مِنَ الْقَوِیِّ غَیْرَ مُتَتَعْـتِعٍ

That nation or government in which the rights of the oppressed and destitute people" are not guarded and where the mighty and powerful people are not forced to accede (to these rights will never see happiness and salvation."(۱

After being deprived of the right to lead the community for twenty-five years, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) explained the reason why he accepted :the leadership (Khilafah), at that time

أَمَّا وَالَّذِی فَلَقَ الْحَبَّهَ وَبَرَأَ النَّسَمَهَ لَوْ لاَ حُضُورُ الْحَاضِرِ وَقِیَامُ الْحُجَّهِ بِوُجُودِ النَّاصِرِ وَ مَا أَخَذَ اللَّهُ علی

.(Nahjul Balagha, Volume ۳, Page ۱۱۳ (Letter that was written to Malik al-Ashtar -۱

الْعُلَمَاءِ أَنْ لَاّ يُقَارُّوا عَلى كِظَّهِ ظَالِمٍ وَ لَاّ سَغَبِ مَظْلُومٍ لَأَلَـقَيْتُ حَبْلَهَا عَلى غَارِبِهَا وَ لَسَقَيْتُ آخِرَهَا بِكَأْسِ أَوَّلِهَا.

Behold, I swear by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings that“ had it not been for the people coming to me and had the supporters not exhausted the argument and if there had not been the pledge of Allah with the scholars that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope (of Khilafah) on its own shoulders and would (have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one.”(١)

Through his clear speech and the unmistakable events of Islamic history and keeping in mind that those who held the flag of the religion in every time were always the oppressed individuals of society and the powers who worked against the Prophets were the ones who made up the exploitation powers (of their time), is it correct what the materialists claim the following about religion that: “Religion instructs its followers to observe patience and tolerance in the face of oppression from the exploiters and that one should consider their oppression as being a part of undisputable fate and ”.destiny that has protected the interests of the exploiters

The pressures and forces exacted by the leaders in relation to their subjects and the“ extortion and encroachment on the rights of the Feudalists and the Aristocrats in relation to the oppressed and downtrodden people

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.Ibid., Volume ١, Speech ٣ -١

even though it lead to violent uprisings – however, by drawing upon the parallels - that these uprisings and ineffectiveness had, lead to consolation in the minds of those who were deprived amongst the society and thus it was slowly thought that religion ".had a stupefying effect on the soul of a person

The person who has even the least amount of knowledge in relation to the plan that religion has brought forth, would know that all of the incorrect observations (mentioned in the above mentioned quotes) were designed to confuse the people .who do not know the truth and realities about religion

The issue of observing patience is a belief that even the materialists of our time possess. It is indeed one of the upright principles of the ethical teachings which all nations and all people - including the materialists - have true faith in. Without this main ethical trait, there is not a single person who possesses aims and goals (for .(himself) that would ever be able to reach his objectives (without this trait

This is so because the meaning of patience (sabr) is not that one gives in to the oppression of a tyrant. In no culture or in any of the books of ethical traits has patience been explained in this way. Rather, the meaning of patience (sabr) means to be firm on the path to reach one's goals and to have endurance in the face of tribulations. Thus, there is not a single nation that has reached

to any point without showing endurance and firmness (on the path towards their (goal).(1)

Therefore, the true meaning of patience is opposite to that which the materialists imagine it to be as it truly means to be firm and resolved against the opposing enemies and opposition to the incorrect wishes and desires of the soul or the unpleasant events that happen in one's life. Such an ethical principle is one which will destroy subjugation, demolish the empires of the oppressors and one which will bring .about success and victory in the various stages of one's personal life

The aversion that Islam shows to oppression and tyranny is to such an extreme, that even the person who is pleased with an oppressor living is counted as being amongst :those who commit oppression

قَالَ الإِمَامُ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ الصَّادِقُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ): أَلْعَامِلُ بِالظُّلْمِ وَ الْمُعِينُ لَهُ وَ الرَّاضِى بِهِ شُرَكَاءُ.

Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: "The person who oppresses (another person) and the one who helps him and the one who is pleased (with him (oppressing someone else) are all equal to one another."(2)

Safwan ibn Mahran, was one of the close friends and companions of Imam Musa ibn Ja`far al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) who owned many camels. One day the Imam (peace be upon him) reproached him by saying that, "All of your deeds are good except one of them and that is that you rent out your camels to Harun al-Rashid, the ".Oppressor

,The companion said to the Imam

١- We have explained the true meaning of sabr or patience as explained in the Qur'an under the commentary of verse ١١ of Surah Luqman (٣١) where it is stated: وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ "So then bear with patience that which we have tested you with."

٢- Wasail al-Shi`a, Volume ١٢, Page ١٢٨.

I swear by Allah! I never rent him my camels for vain or prohibited acts. Rather, at" the time of the Hajj, I give him my camels so that he is able to visit the House of Allah. I do not even go with him on this journey; rather, I send those who work with me to ".accompany him

The Imam replied, "When you give Harun the camels, do you request him to pay you in full before he takes them or does he give you an amount and then the rest is paid to "?(you (when he returns

Safwan replied, "He pays me an amount before he goes and then the rest when he ".returns from his trip

The Imam then asked Safwan, "Do you wish that Harun returns back from his trip "?alive so that he can pay you back the rest of the money that he owes you

".The companion replied, "Yes

The Imam (peace be upon him) then said, "Whoever is happy or wishes that an oppressor is given a long life is considered as an oppressor himself and his eventual (outcome will be the hell-fire."(۱

Yes! That what the materialists say about religion has been extracted from Christianity and is close to the teachings of the Christian Church since in their opinion, one of the teachings of the Messiah (`Isa ibn Mariam, peace be upon them both) is ,that if a person hits you on one side of your face, then give him the other side too

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.Ibid., Volume ۱۲, Page ۱۳۲ -۱

as it is stated: “But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on (the right cheek, turn to him also the other.”(١)

Brotherhood in Islam

point

(Verse ١٠)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

Without doubt the believers are brothers of one another so then make peace and harmony between your brothers and have consciousness of Allah so that maybe He will show you mercy.

The closest relationship and bond that can take place between two people during the course of their lifetime is that of brotherhood. Although the relationship between a father and his children is much stronger and powerful than the ties of brotherhood, however this relationship (between a father and his child) is one in which the two people are not on an equal level – from the point of view of time, situation, character and the level of respect (that they must show one another), they are different.

The only relationship that is a complete manifestation of strong unity, love and affection is the one that exists between two people who are living on an equal plane in life and this is the relationship of brotherhood and sisterhood.

This unbreakable relationship that has been brought about by creation is constantly found in all environments and societies and is the secret behind love, affection and closeness that exists between individuals. It is because of this fact that the Qur’an invites humanity to unite and come together under the principles of

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١ – New Testament, St. Matthew, Chapter Five, Verse ٣٩ (as found on bible.gospelcom.net).

love and affection and thus, has referred to the faithful believers of a society as being .brothers (and sisters) of one another

For the first time in history, a community of people that numbered hundreds of millions was brought together as brothers of one another and the following sentence :was made their slogan and motto

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ...

"...Without doubt the believers are brothers of one another"

You may ask yourself this question that why has this circle of relationship not been made wider and taken all of humanity into it as brothers of one another, whereas (in this verse) the sphere of brotherhood is limited to only those who have true faith? The answer to this question is obvious and a cursory glance is sufficient for us to .understand the reason why this was not done

This religious brotherhood is not a simple formality and that too of a political nature such that all of humanity – whether or not they have the qualities of brotherhood – should be classified and grouped together as brothers of one another. Rather, the purpose of making the believers brothers of one another points to a series of noble societal and ethical goals and responsibilities that take shape within the greatness of .the Islamic brotherhood that the believers must manifest to one another

All of these responsibilities and goals have been mentioned in the books of Ahadith and Jurisprudence in detail. Therefore, until unity of thought and spirit towards one ,goal and belief is not established

.there can never be firm unity and association of individuals

If one day, a group of people who are wavering (in belief) in their hearts are seen uniting together under a series of political issues and trying to unite as brothers for a specific cause (other than that of religion), then even the smallest thing would be able to break the unity that was brought about through the mere agreement of thoughts, spirits, difference of (personal benefits) and difference of foundations, and would thus .cause them to separate from one another

A society whose axis or pivot is not based on (unity of) ideas and beliefs and in which everyone acts as individuals will always rotate upon various thoughts and ideologies opposed to one another and no sort of unity or harmony will ever exist amongst those people. Only to that level that unity and harmony protects their material interests will they be able to lead a peaceful life. If one day a person who is united with others sees that he is not in need of this form of unity and feels that he has become successful in the arena of his own life and has reached his goals, then all of the relations that united him with others – which were all based on political motives – will be turned into .differences and disputes

Never would a Muslim – one who has true faith in One Allah and the Day of Judgement and who believes in the governance of justice

and equality and who deems it necessary to follow the noble moral traits and the humanistic virtues - be able to become the brother of an atheist who does not believe in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) or the Last Day and who feels that ethical teachings and traits are just play-things and considers such teachings as fables.

Unity under the Luminance of True Belief

If we have doubts and misgivings about every issue among the issues within a society, or require that in order to acknowledge a specific issue that we must carry out analysis and research and claim the need to have proof (for these various issues), then we must not let these (doubts and misgivings) creep into the discussion of unity and harmony in the society. Thus, we can never find even a single person in this world who would say that dispersion and disarray (of the society) are beneficial and that unity and agreement are harmful and detrimental, since even the smallest benefit that can come about through unity and agreement returns back to the society.

It is through uniting small independent forces with one another that under the shadow of such unity can great power and strength come about which would be able to bring about numerous changes in the lives of people.

The huge dams of the world that manifest themselves as blocking large bodies of water are actually joining smaller bodies (of water) together since these small individual rivers do not have the ability to produce electricity, nor can they be

.beneficial for the irrigation of crops

However, when all of these small rivers join to make one major body of water, then at this time they are able to produce thousands of kilowatts of electricity and it is through this one large river that thousands of hectares of land can be irrigated. Where do all of these great bounties come from? They come about through the unity of small drops of water that were once weak and did not possess the ability to do .anything on their own

The power of the atom is clear to everyone. A single atom does not have the power or ability to do anything and is so small and insignificant that even the most powerful .microscopes cannot see what it looks like

However when innumerable atoms join together, they produce such power and energy that if just a few atomic bombs were to be detonated, the civilization and life of mankind on this Earth, as we know it, would be brought to an end. In the span of a few minutes, the entire surface of the Earth would be a mass of fire with piles of .ashes lingering everywhere

:In the words of a poet

غرض ز انـجمن و اجـتماع جمع قواست

چرا که قطره چـو شد مـتصل به هم دریاست

,The goal of union and coalition

.Is to gather the powers

,Since when drops of water gather

.Then they form a (powerful) river

ز قطـره هیچ نیـاید ولی چو دریا گشت

هر آنـچه نفـع تصور کنی در او آن جـاست

Nothing comes about from

p: ١٠٩

,(a drop (individual

.However the river (unity) runs strong

,Any benefit that can be imagined

.(Comes about from that river (of unity

ز قطره ماهی پیدا نـمی شود هر گز

مـحیط باشد کزوی نـهنگ خواهد ساخـت

,A fish can never be seen

.In one single drop of water

,How is it then from the river

.Whales can come about

ز گندمی نتوان پخت نان و قوت نـمود

چو گشت خرمن و خروار وقت بر گ و نواست

, A loaf of bread can never be made

,From a single head of wheat

,But when gathered together and thrashed

.It brings out all of its prosperity

ز فرد فرد مـحالست کارهای بزر گ

ولی ز جمع توان خواست هر چه خواهی خواست

,It is impossible for individuals - one by one

.To take on a great task

,However, from uniting together

.Anything that is desired can be accomplished

بلی چو مورچگان را وفاق دست دهد

بـه قـول شیخ هـژبر ژیان اسـیر و فنـاست

,Unity and conciliation can be seen

.In the way that the ants gather together

,In the words of the Shaikh

.Glory is strong, captive and temporary

ولی چو نفرقه اندر میان جمع افتد

هـمان حکـایت صـوفی و سیـد و مـلاست

,However when separation occurs

.To a community that is together

,They become just like the stories

.Of the Sufis, the Sayyid and the Mullah

Not only must the physical strength of the people be made use of with everyone working towards one common goal, rather we must also seek assistance through the intelligence and aptitude of the members of society. Through taking advice, working together and accepting the opinions of others, we must remove the monstrous .difficulties that are facing us

The Noble

Qur'an considers asking advice and (through this), changing one's opinion as one of the characteristics of a person with true faith and has said:

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَ أَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوهَ وَ أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

"And those people who respond to the call of their Lord and who (also) uphold the Salat and proceed in their activities through consultation with one another and give out in charity of that which We have granted to them."(1)

The same point mentioned in the above verse of the Qur'an can also be seen in the poem previously quoted and also in the following two lines of poetry:

اگر مرا و تو عقل خویش کافی بود

چرا به امر خداوند، امر بر شوری است

If mine and your intelligence were enough,

Then why has Allah commanded us to consult (one another)?

بدین دلیل ((ید اللّٰه مع الجماعه)) سرود

که با جماعت، دستی قوی یدی طولـی است

We must resonate with the proof that:

'The Hand of Allah is with the Congregation.'

Since by being with the community,

The strong hand has a longer reach.

What is the Basis and Source of Unity?

A majority of Sociologists state that: "The human being is a societal animal and within his creation, he has been given a strong attraction to living within a community." At this point, we must see that under what factors and conditions does our societal life take form?

Some of today's Sociologists are of the firm belief that factors such as: race, language, sharing a common history and country, blood-ties and other elements make up the unity of nations. The society which

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.Surah al-Shuara' (۴۲), Verse ۳۸ -۱

is brought about through these elements just mentioned is the same one that the .Legal Experts refer to as a Nation

It is under the shadow of these factors that one is able to bring about a nation which is united in which the various organs and members, who are living in the midst of one .another, can have a loving and close life together

However these people (who have such a belief) have forgotten an important point: how is it possible for a society which is made up of people of various ideologies, who have different wishes and desires (for their own life) and who have their own opinions and thoughts in relation to every aspect, to come together as one united nation with ?complete harmony and live among one another in this form

It is true that those factors which were mentioned do help and play a role in the unity and harmony of a society, however as long as there is no unity in thought and idea and each person has his own goals and ideologies, the unity and harmony of the individuals under these factors and principles will be involuntarily brought about and .thus will not be permanent and stable

If one day, the people were to unite under one common goal and stretch forth their hands towards one another in unity and express their brotherhood towards one another, then they would definitely be able to reach their goal. In this event, not a single event could

occur that would cause them to fall into intellectual difference and discrepancy in relation to their wishes and goals - nor would they fall prey to conflicts and divergences that would lead them to be divided with one another.

A society whose axis does not rotate around one thought and ideology in which the people revolve around various factors that have been imposed upon them will never have a guaranteed unity (of the society) since the path of life of each person is determined through (one's own) thoughts and ideological beliefs, and not factors that have been imposed upon one. If a day comes that amongst the people of a nation who share the same nationality, blood-ties and language - a spiritual bond and cultural affinity were to come about, then there could never be any sort of blow brought to the unity of that nation.

It is here that the great leaders of humanity – who take their inspiration from the Divine Revelation – have said that the foremost pillar of nationality must be based on unity of thought and ideology. The people of that society - who from the point of view of their ideological beliefs and method of thought share a common opinion – have been referred to as brothers of one another, and thus, their motto would be:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ...

"Without doubt the believers are brothers of one another..."

In his historical speech, the greatest leader of humanity, Prophet Muhammad (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny))

categorized the people within a society who have true belief as being equivalent to the limbs of one body, such that they all share one common thought and ideology, one soul that commands and governs over them and whose hearts are united.(1)

In summary, the material factors which contain absolutely no soul or essence such as: nationality, language, blood (relation) and others which cannot build unity of thought and which are not from those things which the human soul has been inspired with, cannot bring about the basis by which nationality and the principles of a common life are based upon and which can lead to one united nation of people – which have complete love and close friendship and unity amongst the individuals. Rather, individuals that are brought together under the banner of these factors - due to the difference of thoughts and their divergence in distinguishing their goals - will give up any sort of unity and alliance that they have amongst one another.

In addition to this, the person who wishes to build a nation under the flag of these sorts of material factors can never claim that with these factors in place, they have been able to bring all of humanity as brothers of one another, nor will they be able to claim that the entire society has become spiritually close.

Rather, the only claim they would be able to bring is that they have been able to unite a large number of people (not all) together under

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1- Safinat al-Bihar, Volume ۱, Page ۱۳.

.(certain incidental phenomena (those factors which were previously mentioned

If the sublime Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was able to bring the hearts of various groups of people together and bring people of various nations – each of which had their own nationality and language – together as one nation and make them brothers of one another, then he was able to do so because he was able to bring about one common united thought and ideology amongst them all. In addition, the direction of all of their lives was geared towards .one goal and all of their ideas and thoughts were channelled into one main thought

آفرین بر همت آن اوستاد صد هزاران ذره را داد اتـحاد

,Congratulations to the efforts of that one leader

.Who brought unity to hundreds of thousands of individual minds

An Effective Medication

On the day that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was commanded to convey the Heavenly messages of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), we see that the environment of the Muslims in Madinah was plagued with differences. It was not possible to restore back to health the sickness of division that had plagued the community, except by going under the banner of unanimity, accord and unity of .thought

The Muhajirin and the Ansar had been brought up in two completely different environments and each of them felt some sort of supremacy over the other group, while the Ansar themselves were divided into two factions which had the

fires of war raging between them for years. The Muslims who had come from places far and wide such as Habasha (Ethiopa) and other parts of the world suddenly .converged on the land of Madinah

From the point of view of their nationality and language, a majority of them differed from one another. The most powerful of relations that existed amongst all these people - keeping in mind the differences that were also there - was the relationship of true faith and religious brotherhood through which the enmity, hatred and other negative effects that their differences created amongst themselves, was removed .from their hearts

One day, the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) stood :up in the Masjid, turned towards the Muslims and said

تَآخَوْا فِی اللّٰهِ أَخَوَینِ أَخَوَینِ

O' people!) Stand up so that I can make you brothers of one another (in the name of)" ".(Allah

Upon hearing this, the Muslims stood up and each one was made a brother of another one whom they had a great deal of love and affection for and it was here that the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) chose Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) as his own brother.(۱)

This sort of brotherhood which took place amongst a very small circle of people is a minor example of the unity that ruled over the Islamic society which encompassed all Muslims and made them brothers of one another. Under the

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۱- Sirah ibn Hisham, Volume ۱, Page ۱۲۳-۱۲۴.

greatness of this Islamic brotherhood, the Muslims were victorious over all of their difficulties and as long as this religious bond of love and affinity was amongst them, .they had supremacy over the entire world

An Alert Enemy

The enemies, who at that time were desperately seeking the down-fall of the Muslims, struggled and are continuing to struggle (even today) to cut the firm roots of unity from amongst the Muslims and to remove this affinity from the Muslim nation. By bringing up a series of issues which are not related to the fundamental principles (of the religion), they have been able to light the fire of difference amongst the Muslims. This is not only the goal of the enemies of our present time - rather, from that first day that this Islamic commandment was given, those who wanted bad .things to come to the Muslims struggled to break the unity and accord

One day, a group of young men from the tribes of Aws and Khazraj (two tribes from `Arabia that had been at war for countless years, however under the shadow of Islam and true faith, were able to come together as brothers of one another and have .love rule between them both) were sitting together

A Jew from Madinah named Shas ibn Qais who was very jealous of the unity that had been brought about between these two tribes, entered into their gathering and through the shrewdness that he possessed, started to speak about and remind them about the bitter moments that

had transpired between these two tribes during the battle of Ba`ath before the coming of Islam. He spoke in such a manner that he was able to instigate the youth of .both tribes to reach for their swords causing them to re-ignite the war of Ba`ath

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was informed of what was transpiring and he himself went to this gathering and gave a speech in which he mentioned, "Islam made you brothers of one another and commanded you to remove ".any form of hatred or grudges that remain in your heart

When the speech of the Prophet reached to this phase, the deafening sound of crying and weeping could be heard and in order to attest to the religious brotherhood that existed amongst themselves, they began to hug each other and asked Allah (Glorified (and Exalted is He) for forgiveness.(١)

If on that day a man named Shas existed (that caused such turmoil), then today too there are those who under different names, different physiognomies and different shapes are trying to stir up corruption within the Muslim society. It is these people .who are trying to strike devastating blows to the unity and harmony of the Muslims

Examples of Self-Sacrifice through Islamic Brotherhood

One of the greatest manifestations and materializations of brotherhood is that a .Muslim does not encroach upon the life, reputation and wealth of his brother

This point has been mentioned in one of the valuable pieces of advice from the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon

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.Ibid., Page ٥٥٥ -١

him and his progeny) which he delivered to a large gathering of people in Mina. In this assembly, he turned towards his companions and addressed them as such: "(O' People!) Today is a day which is very sacred in the sight of your Lord and this land of Mina too is one of sanctity and this month (Dhul Hijjah) which we are presently in, is a noble month in the sight of Allah!"

إِنَّ دِمَّائَكُمْ وَ أَمْوّالَكُمْ وَ أَعْرّاضَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَرّامٌ كَحُرْمَهِ يَوْمِكُمْ هٰـذٰا وَ بَلَدِكُمْ هٰـذٰا وَ شَهْرِكُمْ هٰـذٰا

"Unquestionably your lives and your properties and your reputations are all sacred and sacrosanct just as this day of yours, this land of yours and this month of yours (are sacred)."(1)

The Prophet repeated this sentence three times and then looked towards the sky and said:

أَللّٰهُمَّ بَلَّغْتُ

"O' Allah (You bear witness that) I have (fulfilled my responsibility and) conveyed the message."

In order to nurture and cultivate this spiritual relationship, Islam has laid down commandments through which the Muslims are able to make their brotherhood and love for one another known (to one another) in a practical manner.

There was once a man in the Masjid of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) who asked Imam Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Baqir (peace be upon him), "I am this man's friend (pointing to the person beside him)." The Imam replied, "Show the level of your friendship to him, because by expressing your love and friendship for a person, you will make the

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۱- Sirah Ibn Hisham, Volume ۲, Page ۶۰۵.

(relationship last (longer)."(1)

The words of the leaders of Islam (the Prophet and A'immah) in making this religious affinity strong are so many in number than we would not even be able to bring forth one-tenth of them (in this book), however from amongst all of these narrations and commandments, we present two traditions. The Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has said:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ فِی تَرَّاحُمِهِمْ وَ تَعَاطُفِهِمْ بِمَنْ_زِلَهِ الْجَسَدِ الْوَّاحِدِ إِذًا اشْتَکی مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ وَّاحِدٌ تَدَّاعی لَهُ سَّائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالْحِمی وَالسَّهَرِ

"Surely the believers – in relation to the mercy and compassion and affection (that they show for one another) - are the same as one body. Therefore, if one part of the body is feeling pain, then it complains about this pain to the other parts of the body (through a fear and hurt (so that the body can help the hurt or injured part)."(2)

Therefore, any time a Muslim is facing troubles or difficulties, it is incumbent upon all the individuals of the society to rush to his aid and to also share in his grief.

Sa`di, the gifted poet and brilliant orator from Shiraz has taken inspiration from this hadith and expressed it in the following poem:

The Children of Adam are related to one another,

And in their creation, they are all from one essence.

If one part of the body falls into pain and suffering,

Then all other parts of the body are also affected.

In the second hadith, the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah

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1- Safinat al-Bihar, Volume ۱, Page ۱۲.

2- Al-Taj, Volume ۲, Page ۱۳۶.

:be upon him and his progeny) has said

أَلْمُسْلِمُونَ تَتَكَّافِـىءُ دِمٌـــاؤُهُمْ وَ تَسْعـى بِذِمَّتِهِمْ أَدْنٌاهُمْ وَ هُمْ يَدٌ عَلى مَنْ سِوٌاهُمْ

The worth of the blood (the lives) of the Muslims is equal to another Muslim and even" the smallest trust that is given from one of them to another must be honoured, and in the face of foreigners (enemies) they are all united together and are one force ((against the opponents)."(1)

We suffice with these two hadith in relation to Islamic brotherhood, which is one of the most essential principles of Islam for the Muslims. Later on, the rights of a believer (over his brother will be mentioned.(2)

In truth, we are able to say that the closest relationship and firmest link which can exist within a society and which will never be broken - is the religious affinity which covers all boundaries of status, racial diversity and spiritual levels and we must .struggle to maintain this benefit that the religion has given us

Yes! In the words of the Qur'an, that which has brought about this religious affinity is the Islamic brotherhood. An everlasting peace and harmony can never be brought .forth except through this commandment

One of the necessary criteria for religious brotherhood is that whenever two groups of Muslims fall into disagreement with one another, it is necessary for all of the believers to struggle and try to put out the flames of war between them and to raise the flag of peace and agreement over them. However, Islam is not

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Wasail al-Shi`a, Section ۳۱ (Section on the Penalty for Killing Another Person); - ۱ .Maghazi, Volume ۲, Page ۸۳۶

Many of these rights have been mentioned in the book, Wasail al-Shi`a in the - ۲ .section of "Ahkam al- `Ushrah", Volume ۸, Page ۱۶۶ and on

hell-bent on achieving peace at any cost. Rather, Islam wants peace on the basis of justice and equality and one in which the rights of both sides are protected and thus, :the following verse of the Qur’an mentions

فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ...

”...So then make peace between the two parties with justice“

If this is not done, then a peace treaty or any other sort of agreement which tramples upon the rights of one of the two parties would not be a long lasting one. Rather, it would lay the groundwork for enmity and hostility which is not looked upon favourably .by the teachings of Islam

Respecting the Repute of Another Muslim

point

(Verse ١١)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاَ يَسْخَرْ قَومٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْراً مِّنْهُمْ وَلاَ نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْراً مِّنْهُنَّ وَلاَ تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلاَ تَنَابَزُوا بِالأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

O’ you who have true faith! Do not let men make fun of other men – perhaps they“ may be better than the other (group of men). Also, do not let women make fun of other women, as it may be that they are better than the other (group of) women. Do not find faults in yourselves and do not defame one another by using bad names. How bad it is after having true faith that a person (does these acts) but does not turn in ”.repentance (to Allah) so then surely it is these people who are the oppressors

The purpose of this

verse and the next verse is to explain a series of Islamic rights that brothers in faith have upon one another which must be observed. Seeing as to how the previous verse stated that Muslims are brothers of one another, in this verse and the one that follows, some of the principles of etiquette are elucidated upon, which in reality are .the effects of brotherhood in Islam

The brotherhood of the Muslim Ummah is not simply a visible and verbal brotherhood – rather, it is a relationship of rights (upon one another) which has requirements and necessities (that must be fulfilled) and thus, the Muslims must observe these rights in .relation to one another

In this verse, the first three ethical principles that those who have true faith must :observe are mentioned as being

.Showing respect to the character or repute of a Muslim .١

.Prohibition of looking for faults in other people .٢

.The prohibition of using or attributing bad nicknames to a believer .٣

.We will explain each of these three principles separately

The first tenet that each Muslim must put into practice is to respect the character of another believer. According to this rule, Muslims must not make fun of one another .and thus they are not permitted to hurt the feelings of each other either

As we know, the level and station of the character of a person can be seen from different angles. There are people who judge and respect others only due to their ;noticeable, outward traits such as ones' well-proportioned body

the beauty of another’s face; economic status; the types of clothing one wears; a person’s style of residence and other such visible traits that reflect one’s material .status

Thus, any classification which is based upon the merits and privileges mentioned leading to respect of the person, would prevent another person from mustering up the courage to speak about a person (that possesses these traits) since it would go against the imaginary character of the person (that they have conjured in their minds). However in a majority of instances, those people who do not posses the .merits that were mentioned, are the ones who are made fun of

The way of thinking and the method of judgement that a Muslim must employ are the exact opposite to what people who simply judge by seeing the apparent and material aspects do. In the teachings of Islam, the apparent and material aspect is not the .scale or criteria used to judge who the better person is

The people whose character is worthy of being respected are those whose soul and presence have been enlightened with the divine Nur (light) of Cognizance (Ma`rifah) of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and whose entire presence is the focus of the noble traits and etiquette and whose way of life is based on forgiveness and pardon. Performing good deeds, showing mercy and compassion, nobility and generosity, humility and modesty, pleasantness and honesty, piety and refraining from sins, etc... .are what make up such a person

By

possessing such traits, a person raises his own worth and status and any type of speech or action that goes against such a person's character or personality would be forbidden and not allowed to be spoken about him (according to the teachings of .(Islam

Support from the Qur'an in Strengthening this Principle

:The part of this verse that states

...عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْراً مِّنْهُمْ...

"...perhaps it may be that they are better than you are..."

proves to us why the Qur'an tells us it is forbidden to make fun of people who have true faith. Seeing as to how people do not possess any knowledge of the heart, mind and spiritual thoughts of another person, a true human (who possesses faith and the righteous ethical traits) and one who is showing off look similar from the point of view .of their physical appearance

It is also possible that a person who does not possess beauty, good looks, wealth in this world, nor a lofty position in the society, would be the one that people make fun; of however from the point of view of his soul and spirit, he may be purer than other .people

By him possessing a greater spiritual level of humanity and ethical traits, he would be much higher in the presence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) than these other people. If the greatness of such a soul and the perfection of such a character were to be made incarnate in a physical body, then those who are making fun of them - in place of

.mocking them - would actually have to lower their heads in submission and surrender

It is due to this (the criteria of judging the character of a person as being based on a series of hidden issues which the people cannot see – the affairs of the inner heart and soul) that it is not permissible for a person who has true faith to mock other people. We are told in this verse that there is a possibility that such a person (whom we want to make fun of) may be higher and much greater from the point of view of his .inner-soul, humanistic characters, and his great ethical traits

Psychological Motives for Making Fun of Others

When we look at the psychological reasons that lead a person to make fun of other people, we see that there is a defect or shortcoming that the person himself possesses and by making other people feel inferior, he wants to try and compensate for his own shortcomings and thus he tries to instill in himself his supposed greatness. Therefore those people who have character and personality and who do not feel inferior or feel that they have defects within themselves, will never resort to acting in this manner and whenever they see people acting like this, it truly pains and grieves .them

In addition to this, there are also other factors which are at play such as: these sorts of people actually derive pleasure and enjoyment in destroying the character of other people and making fun of them and feel their own

spirit getting larger. Such people end up having their soul become fierce and animal-like and take control over them. This internal mental state comes about through a series of various psychological traits and is physically manifested through making fun of other people.

As we see in the world around us, a wild animal resorts to killing, ripping to shreds and devouring weaker animals to satiate his hunger and to gain pleasure. Similarly, people who try to make others feel inferior act just like the wild beasts by attacking people who do not have the ability to defend themselves thus destroying their character and self-esteem. Through this act, they seek to satiate the hunger of their own minds and to derive spiritual pleasure.

In order to protect the character of people of all levels, Islam has commanded that individuals must be respected and no Muslim is to be considered as insignificant or worthless:

لاٌ تَحْقِرَنَّ أَحَداً مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِنَّ صَغِي_رَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ كَبِ_يرٌ

"Do not consider any of the Muslims as being insignificant, since in the eyes of Allah (that person whom you consider as being insignificant) actually has a high rank."(١)

Through His final Messenger, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) sent the following message to the world that:

وَ قُلْ لِعِبٰادِی يَقُولُوا الَّتِ_ی هِیَ أَحْسَنُ

"And say to My servants (O' Muhammad) that they speak only that which is most excellent."(٢)

Imam Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said:

عَظِّمُوا أَصْحٰابَكُمْ وَ وَقِّرُوهُمْ وَ لاٌ يَتَجَهَّمَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضاً

"Treat your companions and friends with kindness

.Majmu`ah Warram, Volume ۱, Page ۳۱ -۱

.Surah al-Isra’ (۱۷), Verse ۵۳ -۲

(and never make faces or show contempt towards them."(1)

Truly, the Muslims can learn magnificent lessons by studying the lives of the great leaders of Islam (the Prophet and A'immah) and how they showed respect to the character of other people. The Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) displayed respect for all people and anytime a person came to him, he would open his Qabah (over-coat) on the floor for the person to sit on and would give the pillow that he was resting on to the other person who came to meet him.

Occasion of Revelation of this Verse

In regards to the occasion of revelation of this Qur'anic verse, the Commentators have mentioned two incidents:

1. One day, Thabit ibn Qais who was weak of hearing entered into the Masjid and started to break the lines of the people so that he could get closer to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). One of the Muslims prevented him from moving forward any further and made him sit behind him.

In order to get revenge on the person who stopped him from moving forward, when the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) finished his talk, Thabit turned towards the man and said, "Who are you?" The man replied to him, "I am the son of so and so." In order to ridicule him, Thabit replied, "Behold! This is the son of so and so woman!" and he took the name of this man's mother,

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1- al-Kafi, Volume ٢, Page ١٧٣.

which during the time of ignorance (before the coming of Islam) was a name that people mocked at. When this person heard the name of his mother, he became .embarrassed and thus, lowered his face

Umme Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), the chaste wife of the Prophet of .٢ Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), had wrapped some white cloth around her waist. A small piece of this cloth was hanging out at which time, `Ayesha binte Abu Bakr and Hafsah binte `Umar said to one another, "Umme Salamah has a piece of fabric hanging out which resembles the tongue of a dog when he is chasing "!himself

Due to these incidents, this verse was revealed to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) as a reminder to the men and women that, "Men must not ".make fun of one another nor must women make fun of other women

Picking Faults is Prohibited

point

(Verse ١١)

...وَلاَ تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ...

"...Do not find faults in yourselves"

One of the pillars of perfection of a person's soul and spirit is that he has the ability to examine his own spiritual state, through looking at his own defects and ethical weaknesses. He looks at his own inner self through self-recognition so that he is able to cut all of the roots of the destructive traits that are within his soul and spirit that .have taken shape and materialized over time

From the point of view of the scholars, the discussion of

self-recognition is so important that they say, "The person who wishes to remove the chains of impurity from himself and wishes to save himself from the negative effects that the spiritual defects cause, must not only think of these issues during certain times in his life, rather, he must ponder over these every day during his hectic .schedule

Thus when he finds some quiet and peaceful time, he must sit down, take out a piece of paper and write down all of the actions that he has performed that day and without being biased, must review all of his deeds. If he finds something that was done which ".is not commendable, then he must resolve not to repeat that act

:Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said

عَلى الْعٌاقِلِ أَنْ يُحْصى مِنْ نَفْسِهِ مُسٌاوِيهٌا فِى الدِّيْنِ وَ الرَأْى وَ الأَخْلاٌق وَ الآدٌاب فَيَجْمَعْ ذٌلِكَ فِى صَدْرِهِ أَوْ فِى كِتٌابٍ وَ يَعْمَلُ فِى إِزٌالَتِهٌا.

It is incumbent upon every person of intelligence that he carefully look over his" weaknesses in regards to (following his) religion, his thoughts, etiquette and that of his interaction with other people and he should either record these in his heart or write them down and then he should strive to remove all of these (bad traits) from (himself."(۱

However, there are a group of people who incessantly try to pick faults in people and due to the lack of insight of the (negative) traits within their own selves and being (unaware of the (spiritual

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.Ghurur al-Hikm, Page ۵۵۹ -۱

status of others, are constantly looking to find faults in people and constantly strive to .lift the curtains that cover the defects and shortcomings of others

These are individuals who derive pleasure and enjoyment from finding and picking faults of others, since they feel some sort of inferiority and inadequacy within themselves. Thus, through picking the weak points of others and making these known to people and trying to take away their worth and status within the society, they feel .that they can put their own inferiority at ease

At this point in time, it is not our goal to discuss the reasons why people start picking faults in others – rather, that which is important for us to realize is that we must stop .and think a little bit about the wickedness and immorality of such an act

The effects of speaking bad and criticizing the actions of other people plays a role in the friendship and affinity between two people, such that this closeness is removed (from them). The friendship and trust is converted into animosity and sometimes hatred - whereas praising a person for his good deeds and flattering him for his .righteous acts results in the roots of friendship being made even stronger

In relation to people who always look at the weaknesses and faults of other people, :Imam Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said

كَفى بِالْمَرْءِ عَيْـباً أَنْ يُبْصِرَ مِنَ النّاسِ مٌا يَعْمى عَنْهُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ.

Sufficient is a person’s own defect (in himself) that“

he tries to pick and look for faults in other people when he himself has those same faults in himself (and does not recognize them)!"(1)

If those who pick faults of others would spend the same energy that they use in looking at the bad in others and through which they reproach other people, on correcting themselves and looking at their own defects and trying to recognize their own souls, imagine what level of happiness they would be able to reach to! It is here that the value and worth of the hadith which has come to us from one of the leaders of our faith is made clear when it has been said:

مَنْ بَحَثَ عَنْ عُيُوبِ النَّاسِ فَلْيَبْدَأْ بِنَفْسِهِ

"The person who busies himself looking into the faults of others should start by looking into the faults of his own self (first)."(2)

The greatest defect of such people is that they can never live around people in a community since they will make known the inner secrets (of others) and thus, nobody would be safe from being in their company.

It is because of this reason that Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has forbidden us from associating ourselves with such people and has said that:

إِيَّاكَ وَ مُعَاشِرَةَ مُتَتَبِّعِي عُيُوبِ النَّاسِ! فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَسْلَمْ مُصَاحِبُهُمْ مِنْهُمْ.

"I warn you about keeping relations with people who look for faults in others, since surely there is not a single person who will be safe from such people."(3)

Pointing Out One's Defects with Sincerity is Not the Same as Fault Finding

A point of interest which

1- al-Kafi, Volume ۲, Page ۴۵۹.
2- Ghurur al-Hikm, Page ۶۵۹.
3- Ghurur al-Hikm, Page ۱۴۸.

a great majority of people are uninformed about is that picking faults of others and insulting them in the presence of other people is one thing, whereas guiding them and pointing out the proper way to do things and showing them their errors is another .thing

Picking the faults of others is one of the negative ethical traits, whereas guiding people and informing them of their own shortcomings by advising and giving them .good council is one of the religious and humanistic responsibilities

Therefore, it is incumbent upon every spiritually conscious person to save his fellow human beings from a terrible end and that dark day (when everyone will have to .(answer for their actions

Informing people of the shortcomings in their own lives is so important and valuable that Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) classified this as the :greatest gift that a person can give to another and has said

رَحِمَ اللّٰهُ امْرَأً أَهْدى إِلَيَّ عُيُوبِـى

May Allah's mercy be upon that person who offers a gift to me by pointing out my" (own mistakes and shortcomings."(١

:In addition, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said

لِيَكُنْ آثَرُ النّٰاسِ عِنْدَکَ مَنْ أَهْدى إِلَيْکَ عَيْبَکَ

Let the best person in your estimation be that person who points out to you your" (faults and shortcomings and presents them to you as a gift."(٢

Principally, the first step that a person can take to cure his physical and spiritual sicknesses and to remove the societal evils is that one becomes

.Tuhaf al-`Uqul, Page ٣۶۶ -١

.Ghurur al-Hikm, Page ۵۵٨ -٢

precisely aware of the sources of these diseases and their various types. As long as this is not carried out, then whatever sort of cure or remedy that is applied will be of .no benefit or use

The person who is scared of straight talk finds the truth being brought out into the open as being something bitter to accept. He finds it hard to acknowledge and accept any sort of open dialogue about the problems in the society. Such a person wants the spiritual and societal shortcomings of a community to be swept under the rug and .kept quiet and desires that people should not speak about such things

These people are never content that the writers and speakers of the community bring up the problems of the people and anytime these things are brought up, then those who do not like this done try to destroy and refute what has been written or said. Therefore, we must say to such a person: "May you be destroyed! Not bringing up "!these issues (the problems of a community) is an error in itself

It is not only in the instance of this negative ethical trait (speaking bad and picking the faults of others) and the natural human disposition (of guiding people and showing .them their short comings and faults) that are confused with one another

Rather, it is possible that in many of the other natural human dispositions and ethical principles, a series of other detested spiritual and ethical traits can also

be confused with one another. However with careful research, we are able to discern .the limits of each of these from one another and keep them separated

Stirring Up a Person's Emotions

In bringing up this ethical principle, the Qur'an has appealed to the emotions of humanity and thus when it wants to instruct its' adherents that they should not pick :the faults of others it says

...وَلاٌ تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ...

".Do not find faults in yourselves"

The aim of expressing it in this form (that we must not find faults in ourselves) is to stir up the sentiment of the person - since spiritual fraternity and religious brotherhood bring about such a bond of friendship and love amongst the believers that they are like one organ and one collective body. Thus, if a person picks faults with one Muslim, .it is equivalent to picking faults with the entire Muslim body

A Bad Name and Family

point

(Verse ١١)

...وَلاٌ تَنٌابَزُوا بِالأَلْقٌابِ بِئْسَ الإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الإِى_مٌانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُوْلٌئِكَ هُمُ الظٌّالِمُونَ

and do not defame one another by using bad names. How bad it is after having... " true faith that a person (does these acts) but does not turn in repentance (to Allah) so ".then surely it is these people who are the oppressors

Bad Names and Titles

The name and title of a person are the manifestation of the character of that individual. It is because of this fact that a good name and title are classified as being the value and goodness of a person, just like a bad name and title that

a person possess are unpleasant things. Not only is this something that leads to one being made fun of, but it also takes away one's status and character and leads one to .being self-conscious while amongst friends and within the society in general

When the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was officially appointed as a Messenger, a large number of cities and villages had very bad names. A lot of the tribes (of `Arabia) were also renowned for their obscene and repulsive titles and epitaphs. The `Arabs would choose names and titles for their children that !were rude, repulsive and symbolized fierceness, plunder and pillaging

One of the positive steps that the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) adopted on this path was to command his followers to change the names of many of the cities, villages and other parts of the town (that had bad names). He also ordered the tribes or people that had obscene or repulsive names to replace (them (with something better).(١

This noble personality went to such an extreme that he even commanded parents to choose beautiful names for their children and considered this as one of the rights and .obligations that a father must fulfil in respect to his children

The Qur'an al-Majid considers calling one another by rude or obscene names or titles as a form of violation of the rights of another human being and has referred to a person who performs this act

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.Qurb al-Isnad, Page ۴۵ -١

:as being an oppressor and tyrant and by saying

...وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُوْلَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

and whoever does not turn in repentance (back to Allah) is surely of those who are..."
".the oppressors

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was pleased and overjoyed whenever he heard a good name and would say, "Whenever you want to ".send a person to me, send one who has a good name

One day, one of the workers in a temple of idol worshippers (in `Arabia) saw a fox (١ urinating on top of one of the idols. This person thought to himself: "What sort of a thing do we worship that cannot even defend himself such that he does not even have the ability to get a fox to move away from itself?" This thought of his affected his soul :to such an extent, that he composed this line of poetry in relation to what he saw

أَرَبٌّ ىَـ‍بُولُ الثَّعْلَبَانُ بِرَأْسِهِ لَقَدْ ذَلَّ مَنْ بَالَتْ عَلَيهِ الثَّعَالِبُ

?Is a stone idol who is being urinated upon by a fox one to be worshipped"

".Anything that a fox is able to urinate upon is surely despised and infirm

After witnessing this scene, he arrived in the company of the Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and described what he had seen. The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) asked this man what his name was and the man replied, "My name is Ghawi ibn

Dhalim"(۱) The Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) immediately changed his name and said, "Rather (from today) your name will be Rashid ibn `Abdullah."

۲) During the battle of Dhi Qard, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) asked what the name of a particular body of water was – which was extremely sour – and the people replied that it was called Bisan. The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) immediately replied that it is now changed to Nu`man.(۲)

۳) A man once came to the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and when the Prophet met him, he asked him his name. The man replied, "My name is Baghidh (the hated or despised)." The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied, "Your name is now Habib (the beloved)" which was the exact opposite of Baghidh.(۳)

۴) The same thing can be seen in relation to another person that had met the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). When asked his name, the man replied, "My name is `Abdus Sharr' (the Servant of Evil)." The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied to him, "Rather, your name (now) is `Abdul Khair' (the Servant of Good)."(۴)

۵) In the same way, once a woman came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and when she was asked

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۱- Ghawi is in the meaning of one who has been deluded or lead astray, while Dhalim means an oppressor or tyrant. (Asadul Ghabah, Volume ۲, Page ۱۴۹).

۲- Sirah Halabi, Volume ۳, Page ۳۷۷.

۳- Asad al-Ghabah, volume ۱, Page ۲۰۲.

۴- Ibid., Volume ۲, Page ۶۳.

what her name was, she replied, "`Asiyah" (one who commits sins). The Prophet changed her name and said, "From today onwards, you will be known as 'Jamilah' ((beautiful)."(۱)

۶) A man whose name was `Abdul Jan (Servant of the Jinn) came to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and by the command of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) his name was changed to `Abdullah (Servant of Allah).(۲)

۷) Some people who had names such as Jabbar or Qayyum which are names reserved for Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) were commanded by the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to add `Abd to the beginning of them. Therefore, their names were changed to `Abdul Jabbar and `Abdul Qayyum.(۳)

۸) Those people who had names such as `Abdul `Izzah (Servant of Respect), `Abdul Shams (Servant of the Sun), `Abdul Lat (Servant of the Stone Idol named Lat) or even Shaitan (Satan) where all told to change their names and the new name of `Abdullah ((Servant of Allah) was given to all of them.(۴)

There are also other examples in these same instances which in order to keep our discussion short, we will not narrate here. The historian, Ibn Athir is his work, Asadul Ghabah, which is a commentary on the lives of the people around the Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) during the days of Ignorance (pre-Islam), has narrated many more

p: ۱۳۹

۱- Ibid., Volume ۲, Page ۷۶.

۲- Ibid., Volume ۳, Page ۱۷۴.

۳- Ibid., Volume ۴, Page ۳۶۲ and Volume ۵, Page ۲۵۰.

۴- Ibid., Volume ۳, Page ۲۳۲, ۲۴۰, ۲۷۱ and Volume ۴, Page ۳۶۲.

examples of people who had repulsive names and by the commandment of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), their names were changed.

The manifesto of human rights has mentioned that a child's right to have a name is the same as his right to possess a nationality - however it has never been mentioned that the child must possess a decent, righteous name. Islam has a very precise attitude and view point in relation to the life of a child – whether it is before his birth or even after birth - such that even while the child is in the womb of his mother, he is given the right to have his own character. In addition, the individual and societal rights have also been designated for him.

The strict attention that the teachings (of Islam) lay down in relation to the child are to such an extreme that the father and mother have been commanded to name their child even before it is born and if they do not know if the child is a boy or a girl, then they are advised to choose a name that is acceptable to either sex.(۱)

What is important is the name that is chosen for a child. Keeping in mind the love that the father and mother feel for their child, they will strive to choose a good name for him/her. However, how unfortunate it is that sometimes they make a mistake in choosing a name for their

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۱- In a tradition from the Prophet, it is mentioned that he has said: سَـمُّوا أَوْلاٗدَكُمْ قَبلَ أَنْ يُوْلَـدُوا! فَإِنْ لَمْ تَـدْرُوا أَذَكَرٌ أَمْ أُنْــثــى فَسَـمُّوهُمْ بِالأَسْـمٌاءِ الَّتِى تَكُونُ لِلْذَّكَرِ وَ الأُنْــثَــى "Name your children before they are even born! So then if you do not know if you will have a boy or a girl, then name them with a name that is appropriate for both a boy and girl." (Al-Kafi, Volume ۶, Page ۱۸).

children and give them a name that in the opinion of others is not a praiseworthy name, even though from the view point of the father and mother, they feel that they .have given their child a good name

From the point of view of Islam, when choosing a name for one's child, the parents must keep in mind the various points of upbringing and nurturing and must not opt for a bad name that will resemble the child or will always stay with him. A bad name will act as an impediment (for the person) and every time the person who has been given .a repulsive name hears his name called out, he will be put through pain and suffering

Due to this, in the history of the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) we read that whenever he came across an area or a person who had a .repulsive or bad name, he changed it

A man once asked the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), "What is the child's right upon me?" The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied, "You must give him a good name and bring him up in a good way. His right on you is also that you keep a good job or profession in mind for him."(1)

How good it truly is that a name is chosen for the child which indicates the servitude of Allah!(2)

Being Pessimistic About Others

point

(Verse ۱۲)

يَا أَيُّهَا

۱- The hadith states: قَالَ رَجُلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللّٰهِ! مَا حَقُّ ابْنِي هٰذَا؟ قَالَ: تُحَسِّنُ اسْمَهُ وَ أَدَبَهُ و تَضَعُهُ مَوْضِعاً حَسَناً. "A man said, 'O' Messenger of Allah! What is the right of my son?' The Prophet replied, 'Give him a good name and train him well and choose a good job or profession for ".him

٢ – The hadith states: سَمِّهْ بِأَسْمَاءِ مِنَ الْعُبُودِيَّهِ! فَقَالَ: أَيِّ الأَسْمَاءِ هُوَ؟ قَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ "Name (your children) with the name of servitude and worship (to Allah). They said, "And what name is this?" He said, "`Abdul Rahman".

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيـراً مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلاَّ تَجَسَّسُوا وَلاَّ يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكَم بَعْضاً أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتاً فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

O' you who have true faith! Keep away from all sorts of conjecture since surely some" types of conjecture may lead to sin. In addition, do not spy on and do not back-bite one another. Do any of you (who back-bite) love to eat the flesh of your dead brother? Rather, you detest this act, therefore have consciousness of Allah. Certainly Allah is ".the One who is Oft-Turning to you in Repentance, Merciful

In this verse, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has made it incumbent upon the Muslim community to observe three ethical principles which are classified as the necessary rights (of Islam) and are the essentials of Islamic brotherhood and religious .fellowship

:These three principles in summary are

.It is prohibited to have bad thoughts or be cynical of another Muslim .١

.A Muslim is not permitted to spy into the life of another Muslim .٢

.It is forbidden to back-bite and talk bad about other Muslims behind their back .٣

Seeing as to how the principles that have been mentioned, form the primary ethical traits of Islam and play an important role in the improvement of society, and since we have beautiful and interesting explanations from the leaders of our religion in relation to these traits, it would be fitting to discuss each of these separately on their own with .their independent analysis

.At this point, we begin by discussing the first principle – spying on others

Spying on others is a negative, psychological trait which can cause damage and injury to the character, respect, piety and spiritual purity of a person whom one is busy in thought about. A person who is pessimistic about others will forget about the thousands of good deeds and righteous actions that the person performs in his life .and will only pay attention to those few vague, dark and murky actions of the person

We all know that the life, wealth and honour of a Muslim is sacred and any sort of encroachment to these are prohibited in Islam. However in this verse, another form of injustice upon the rights of a Muslim has been alluded to and it is says that: “The respect, honour and character of every Muslim – even in our thoughts and imagination and in making judgements in our mind (about that Muslim) must also be respected and revered.” A Muslim is not permitted to cross the boundaries even in his mind in relation to the purity of another Muslim by harbouring bad thoughts or beliefs .about him or her

In the words of one of our present day Scholars, “The limits of security that Islam has brought forth for the Muslim society is not limited to just the life, wealth and character of another person. Rather, in addition to these three securities, there is also a fourth security which is required and that is the

safety of being judged by others. By this, we mean that within one's thoughts, one must not launch attacks or think bad and unpleasant thoughts about other people.

The respect and character of a Muslim, in addition to being practically adopted, is one that must also be protected in ones' mind and thoughts."

From the point of view of Islam, any sort of bad thoughts or misgiving in ones' mind which would lead to tainting the character of another person is prohibited. Thus, we have been commanded that a society of people who have true faith will keep away from any sort of bad thoughts in relation to others.

In one of his most eloquent sayings in relation to the safety and security of a Muslim in relation to the four traits mentioned above, the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) has stated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ عَلى الْمُسْلِمِ دَمَهُ وَ مٌالَهُ وَ عِرْضَهُ وَ أَنْ يَظُنَّ بِهِ سُوءَ الظَّنِ

"Certainly Allah has made sacred the blood, property and respect of a Muslim (from another Muslim) and he must not even entertain bad thoughts (about the other Muslim)."(1)

If we see that the first three types of safety and sanctity that have been mentioned in the ahadith are enacted in the physical world and in the various global organizations, but the fourth – namely the safety of a person in relation to the thoughts that others entertain about him - is not acted upon except under the shadow of true

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1- Al-Mahajjat al-Baydha, Volume ۵, Page ۲۶۸.

faith in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), then it is because the limits of governance of the material (non-religious) world are limited to the apparent aspects of life only and preventing any sort of trespassing of the inner thoughts are out of the limits and .boundaries of the powers mentioned

Thus, it is only true faith in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) which can prevent a person from this sort of trespassing (through his thoughts), since a Muslim has firm conviction that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) sees all of the actions that he .performs and is even aware of his inner thoughts

The Dangers of Being Pessimistic About Others

The first result of distrusting others will return back to the person who himself .١ possess this trait, since a person who does not trust others will never be able to imagine that others can do things without any (hidden) motive. Therefore, in addition to causing himself spiritual difficulties and putting his soul through troubles, one will lead a difficult life. Also, the burning and passion that are brought about through one's .imagination and thoughts will only increase the (mental) torture of a person

Being pessimistic and not trusting other people also destroys the roots of friendship .٢ and harmony amongst people. The person who thinks bad about others will always imagine such people as being treacherous and will feel that their friendship is something that is not stable or is not built upon faithfulness (to one another). Thus, such people will be compelled to cut

off relations with those around them and it is for this reason that the A'immah (peace be upon them all) have told us:

مَنْ غَلَبَ عَلَيْهِ سُوءُ الظَّنِّ لَمْ يَتْرُكْ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ خَلِيلٍ صُلْحاً

"The person whose pessimism about others takes control over him will destroy any sort of peace or harmony that exists between himself and his friend."[۱]

۳. The person who is pessimistic and distrusts others will always be reclusive and will withdraw himself from others. Due to the fear and apprehension that he has for other people, he will never be able to be sociable with others and it is for this reason that we have been told in the ahadith:

مَنْ لَمْ يَحْسُنْ ظَنُّهُ إِسْتَوْحَشَ مِنْ كُلِّ أَحَدٍ

"A person who does not correct his thoughts about other people, will always be frightened of every single person."[۲]

۴. Being pessimistic and distrustful of others is a major calamity and will affect a person's reason and ability to judge others, since this sickness is a type of disorder that affects the thought pattern and discernment of a person. Thus, he would never be able to judge a situation based upon his logical reasoning or by what reality is.

۵. Pessimism is a sickness that is also contagious such that even those people that a pessimist sits and associates with, will fall into the filth of this negative trait.

۶. Not only does pessimism and distrust affect the soul of a person, rather since there is a direct correlation between the body and the soul,

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۱- Ghurur al-Hikm, Page ۶۹۷.

۲- Ibid.

the body too will remain un-healthy. In the words of the famous thinker of our time, Dr. Alexis Carol says, "Being pessimistic and always finding faults in things also takes away from the life span of a person since this harmful habit affects the nerves of the body known as the sympatic nerves and the internal glands as well. This can be the commencement of other physical disorders including affecting the limbs and organs ".of the body

Having bad thoughts about people without any reason will also drag ones' spouse, .٧ employees, workers and helpers around the house into committing treachery and crimes. This is true since when the leader of the house or the husband continuously pries into the lives of others, then due to his associating thoughts to other people, an untrue picture or representation and despicable act will be made manifest to those around him and these untrue thoughts and feelings will get placed in the hearts of his close ones. In the words of some of the scholars, 'The worker who is at the whims of the bad thoughts of his boss who is constantly thinking that his worker is stealing '.things from his house will slowly push his servant into actually stealing his property

Due to this, in the sacred teachings of Islam, pretending to be very zealous or passionate when the situation does not call for it, or to be extravagant in relation to one's spouse has been highly discouraged. How many times has it occurred

that an innocent, chaste person is pulled towards impurity and people who usually perform good deeds are tempted and encouraged to do bad deeds, just as Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said:

إِيَّاكَ وَالتَّغَايُرَ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْضِعِهِ فَإِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ يَدْعُوا الصَّحِيحَهِ إِلـى السُّقْمِ وَ الْبَرِيئَهِ إِلـى الرِّيْبِ.

"I warn you about being overzealous and obsessive in improper occasions since unquestionably this act will tempt and encourage chaste women to go towards (spiritually) dirtied and fouled traits and would drag women who do not commit sin towards committing wicked deeds."(١)

Prying Into the Secrets of People

point

(Verse ١٢)

...وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا...

"...and do not spy on one another..."

In the previous pages, it was mentioned that verse number ١٢ of Surah al-Hujurat discusses three different negative ethical traits in the following order:

(١) Pessimism or not having trust in others;

(٢) Prying into the secrets of other people;

(٣) Speaking bad behind someone else's back.

The reason why the Qur'an has mentioned these three despised traits in this order is that the first trait (distrusting others) leads to one developing the second negative quality – prying into their private lives. Once a person has bad thoughts of another person, he would naturally begin to spy and scrutinize that person in regards to his actions.

Obviously, when one starts to spy and pry into others' personal lives, he would not be

able to prevent himself from speaking to others about what he has seen – in fact, he would openly and frankly discuss with

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.Ibid., Page ۱۵۲ -۱

others what he knows and thus, he would have no choice but to speak bad and back-bite them. It is because of this reason that the Qur'an mentions these three negative traits in the order that it has, so that the natural relationship between them is made .clear

In the previous discussions, more or less, the damage that being pessimistic in relation to others was discussed and at this point, we will discuss inquisitiveness or as the Qur'an calls it, spying on others. Being inquisitive about the affairs of other people is a negative trait that brings about both ethical and societal harm which can be :summarized in the following points

It was mentioned in our previous discussion that Islam has provided four types of .١ :security for the community of believers

.a. Security of one's life

.b. Security of one's property

.c. Security of one's honour and dignity

d. Security of one's character and personality within the thoughts and minds of other .people

In addition, in one of his most comprehensive lectures on these four types of security, we see that the Noble Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his (progeny) had discussed these in detail.(١)

Societal Dangers Brought About by Prying into Others' Lives

Ruining the Reputation of Others .١

One of the major dangers that is brought about by prying into the lives of others is that the third security (that of one's honour and dignity) is put into danger and an irreversible damage is done to one's dignity and status within the society. This is especially true when after a person has spied on another

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.al-Muhajjat al-Baydha, Volume ۵, Pages ۱۶۲ and ۲۶۸ -۱

person’s actions, and then he goes forth and spreads the secrets and private actions .of that person to others

A very small number of people that pry into the lives of others and come to know the inner state of other people are able to keep the secrets that they find hidden from others. It is these types of people who will never be protected from backbiting and .speaking bad about others

In summary, through spying into the private affairs of another person and then spreading this information to others, the respect and honour of a true believer – which is demonstrated through the security of his life and property within the teachings of .Islam – is trampled upon and destroyed

The essential pre-requisite of religious brotherhood is that a true believer does not spread those things which would result in the loss of a Muslim brothers’ character and .honour amongst the people

In relation to people who spy on the actions of others, our great leader, Imam Ja`far :ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said

أَبْعَدُ مَّا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ الرَّجُلُ يُوَّاخِى الرَّجُلَ وَ هُوَ يَحْفِظُ زَلاَّتَهُ لِيُعَيِّرَهُ بِهَّا يَوْماً

The furthest state that a person can be from the (spiritual presence of) Allah is when“ one befriends another person and he remembers whatever shortcomings and (weaknesses that person has so that he can dishonour him one day.”(١)

Just as can be seen from this hadith, the greatness of this sin is such that a person who does this act

p: ١٥٠

.Al-Kafi, Volume ٢, Page ٣٥٥ -١

would find himself being at the furthest (spiritual) distance away from Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He).

2. Withdrawing and Retreating from Society

Prying into and being inquisitive about the affairs of people is also a form of having bad thoughts about them and in reality, this act is the outcome of being pessimistic about people. When a person spends his time in spying and prying into the affairs of other people, he will also become aware of many of the weaknesses and defects of that person and because of this, he will try to seclude himself from other people as well. Thus in reality, there are very few people that he would actually be able to interact with in his life.

It is highly possible that those defects which he sees in other people do not really play any role in his interaction and contact that he has with them but it will unfortunately take him away from the societal life that he leads amongst the people and thus, he will be dragged towards a life of separation and seclusion from society.

Therefore for such a person who is inquisitive about other people and who also inherently entertains bad thoughts about others, it would not be possible for him, while in this (mental) state, to analyse and investigate (each individual person). Therefore, he would not be able to accept the faults, inner weaknesses and problems that other people have and this would cause him to not have any relations at all with others.

In any case, it

is very difficult to find people who are perfect and are completely without any defects. Obviously, through one's own inquisitiveness, each and every person would be able to find the hidden defects and covered faults of other people and because of this, such a person will – within himself – feel a need to observe some sort of seclusion and distance from others.

Thus, in addition to having bad thoughts about other people and prying into the affairs of others, this group of people will also become reclusive and seclude themselves and will not be able play a constructive role within society.

۳. Loss of Freedom

One of the greatest blessings for a person is to have freedom in his or her actions and by Islam introducing the concept of element of general overseeing, it has appointed the responsibility of the control (of society) and the freedom of humanity in the general overview to the laws of intelligence and the religious regulations.

Thus, the freedom that one has within a society is within the framework of the firm, determined laws of Islam and as a result, the members of a society are free (to do what they want) so long as their own happiness (in the next life) and the freedom of other people is not encroached upon and as long as they do not go towards any of the prohibited acts and refrain from performing the obligatory acts.

Islam has limited the internal (intellectual) freedoms of a person by giving him a hidden police force

within himself), and by establishing the governance of true faith, and has placed) .(limits and guides (on his thoughts

However from the point of view of the intelligence and the religious regulations, there are a series of actions which can be performed with no problem and it is these acts that the religion has referred to as permissible (Mubah) and discouraged (Makruh). However, a person would never perform these sorts of things in the presence of other people, nor would he be pleased if others are made known of him performing .such acts

If other people were to have complete knowledge of the specific events in a person's life, then the pleasure of life that comes about through the freedom of doing as one wishes in his privacy would be taken away. In the view of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), those people who are inquisitive about the affairs of other people and their personal life are not true Muslims and thus, the Prophet :(blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) has said to them

يٰا مَعْشَرَ! مَنْ أَسْلَمَ بِلِسٰانِهِ وَ لَمْ يَخْلُصِ الإِيْمٰانُ إِلـى قَلْبِهِ لاٰ تَذُمُّوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ لاٰ تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرٰاتِهِمْ

O' people! One who gives lip service to Islam but does not have true faith in his heart," do not disparage the (other) Muslims and do not pursue people's short comings and (private matters."(١)

Although the religion of Islam has tried to put a stop on spying and prying into the lives of

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Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ٧٥, Page ٢١۴ (as related from Shaikh Saduq, Thawab al- - ١ .(A`mal, Page ٢١۶

others and has classified these things as being very dangerous and of no benefit, however at the same time in limited circumstances in which the preservation and maintenance of the society is clearly at stake and rests on making known the particular aspects of the lives of people and their hidden deeds and acts, the religion has given the permission that in certain areas of a person's life, it is permissible to .conduct investigations

For example, if there is a young boy and girl who wish to get married to one another, of if two adults wish to enter into a business partnership with one another, or other such scenarios and it is imperative that the other side know the particulars of the life and actions of the other person, then as far as those things which are related to how the person would make his or her final decision are concerned, one is able to gather .more information about the other party

A person can attain knowledge and information in regards to the spiritual qualities and specific issues of the other person's life only to that limit where a decision or work with them is dependent upon such knowledge. If this research is not done, then later on in the future, he may develop a sense of remorse in his work or dealings with the person or he may even come face to face with other forms of corruption due to his .choices

In addition, the people who one asks for

advice in these types of scenarios must speak the truth and they must keep in mind :the saying

أَلْمُسْتَشَّارُ مُؤْتَمِنُ

".The one whom a person seeks advice from must be a person who is reliable"

By this we mean that the person who we are taking advice from in relation to the goodness of a specific act, must himself possess the internal spiritual qualities and .must offer the advice in this way

Speaking Bad Behind Someone's Back

point

(Verse ١٢)

...وَلاَّ يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضاً أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتاً فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

and do not back-bite one another. Do any of you (who back-bite) love to eat the..." flesh of your dead brother? Rather, you detest this act, therefore have consciousness of Allah. Certainly Allah is the One who is Oft-Turning to you in repentance, the ".Merciful

In this part of the verse, one of the worst ethical traits has been mentioned. This destructive trait is regarded as being so despicable and appalling that the Qur'an offers a comparison as it has never done before by stating that speaking bad about !someone behind his back is just like eating the flesh of one's dead brother

The most disgraceful act that can be done is that a person attacks the body of a dead person, and it is especially bad if the deceased happens to be his own brother, and even more so if his method of attack is that he begins to eat from his flesh! This action is so despised and

.wicked that very few people would ever do such a thing

Why has backbiting and talking bad about others behind their back been compared to eating the flesh of one's deceased brother? It is possible that it is for this reason that such a person who eats the flesh of his own brother and the one who back-bites other .people destroy the respect and honour of that person

The indecency of this act is divided such that both people – the one who is speaking the bad words and the one who is listening to them - are both classified as launching .an attack against a person who is not able to defend himself

The one person is eating the flesh of a dead person who is unable to defend himself, while the other person (who is listening to such talk) is aiding in the attack on someone who is not present in the gathering so as to be able to defend himself. Thus, to attack a person who does not have the ability to defend himself is something that is .considered as a shameful act

In other words, the Qur'an draws this similitude and parable that the one who talks bad about a person behind his back is equivalent to the one who eats the flesh of his own deceased brother. Thus, the following four points have been taken into :consideration

۱. One's religious brother is the same as one's biological brother.

۲. A person's dignity and respect are the same as

.his physical flesh

Speaking bad words about a person behind his back and causing harm to his .۳ .character or disrespecting him is equivalent to eating his flesh

Since this person is not present in the gathering and is unable to defend himself .۴ against these cowardly attacks, it is said that he is dead and has been attacked upon .in such a state

It is possible that in order to explain the fourth point, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) referred to the person who back-bites and speaks ill of others behind their back as being lowly and weak (since they are attacking a person :who does not have the ability to defend himself) when he said

أَلْغِيبَهُ جَهْدُ الْعَاجِزِ

Backbiting another person is (equivalent) to fighting a person who cannot defend" (himself."(۱

The Motives that Lead to Backbiting

One of the reasons and motives of a person backbiting is jealousy and envy that one has which makes him speak ill of another person. It is the person's position and status that are upsetting him and through this act (of speaking ill of him) he wishes to lower .the status and worth of him or her

In his speech to Mufaddhal ibn `Umar, Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace :be upon him) has referred to this motive as follows

مَنْ رَوَى عَلى مُؤْمِنٍ رِوَايَةً يُرِيدُ بِهَا شَيْنَهُ وَ هَدْمَ مُرُوؤَتَهُ لِيُسْقِطَهُ مِنْ أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ أَخْرَجَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ وِلاَيَتِهِ إِلـى وِلاَيهِ الشَّيْطَانِ

A person who talks about a believer's conduct hoping that through this act, he is able" to lower the

.Ghurur al-Hikm, Page ۳۶ -۱

other person's value and worth in the eyes of others will be taken out of the (guardianship of Allah and will be placed in the guardianship of the Shaitan."(1)

In this hadith, Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has mentioned one of the motives behind backbiting which is the jealousy, envy and the status that a person may feel for another person within the society. Sometimes however, feelings such as anger, rage, pride and conceit also compel a person towards this negative, ethical .trait

In another hadith, it has first been mentioned that envy and then anger lead a person towards backbiting. It is possible that these attributes have been mentioned in this particular order since envy and anger are two reasons and motives that lead a person :to speak bad about others behind their back, just as it has been stated

لاٌ تُحٰاسِدُوا وَ لاٌ تُبٰاغِضُوا وَ لاٌ يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً وَ كُونُوا عِبٰادَ اللّٰهِ إِخْوٰاناً

Do not have jealousy for one another and do not have hatred for another and do not" (back-bite others and be servants of Allah, brothers to one another."(2)

Dangers of Backbiting

Speaking ill behind a person's back has many negative consequences related to both the individual and the society. In relation to the individual, backbiting has been referred to as oppression against one's believing Muslim brother - and what kind of oppression can be worse than when a person tramples upon the respect and ?character of another believer, such that there is nothing that can make up for this act

Some

.Al-Mahajjat al-Baydha, Volume ٥, Page ١٥٥ -١
.Ibid., Page ٢٥١ -٢

of the consequences that affect an entire society come about from backbiting, and the dangers that come about from these two negative traits of having pessimism and speaking bad behind another person's back have been mentioned in brief in the :previous discussion and which are common between the two, include

A society that becomes contaminated with backbiting will never see agreement and .١ unity and there will never be closeness and love amongst the people. They will never become a society that has matured in humanity, such that love and affection will rule .over everyone

Cooperation and teamwork, with the aim of reaching the sacred goals of the . ٢ society, can only be realized through confidence and trust of one another will never be achieved. The society in which the defects of the people are openly talked about and one in which the curtains that conceal private acts and deeds are lifted and one in which the feeling of confidence gives birth and produces the good opinion that people .have of one another, will be destroyed

Speaking bad behind a person's back is something that ignites the fire of hatred and .٣ enmity. The person who has been spoken bad about and has had his secrets spread out for everyone to know and has had his respect and dignity taken away will be .extremely upset and will obviously resort to taking revenge

Lifting the curtains that cover the sins and transgressions of the people would result .۴ in them performing these disgraceful actions in

the future openly since other's respect and dignity normally prevent one from .committing sins

If a person commits sins, one would do so in private where no one can see him with complete fear (of others). Therefore, if due to speaking bad about others behind their back, we remove the curtains that cover their secrets, and by doing so we destroy their character and dignity, then who is to say that they would not commit these sorts ?(of sins openly in the presence of others (due to our actions

Due to the fear of losing respect and honour, a great number of people stop themselves from committing sins and evil deeds and if this obstacle - which in reality is the spiritual worth of a person - was to be taken away, then there would remain no .barrier for one to refrain from sinning

In addition to this, not only does spreading the secrets of the people lead to added courage of the person doing this act, but also those who are listening to such things and who may be weak of faith may also develop the courage to commit this (and other) sins as well. Thus, this act of backbiting other people will actually be a source .for the spread of corruption and wickedness

:Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said

مَنْ قَالَ فِی مُؤْمِنٍ مَا رَأَتْهُ عَیْنَاهُ أَوْ سَمِعَتْهُ أُذُنَاهُ فَهُوَ مِنَ الَّذِینَ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: إِنَّ الَّذِینَ یُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِیعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِی الَّذِینَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِیمٌ

A person who tells others the actions of another believer that he has seen or heard“ with his ears is of those people about whom Allah (the Glorious and Noble) has said: Unquestionably those people who love to spread evil words around, regarding those (who have faith have a perpetual punishment awaiting them.”(١)

Islam and Racial Superiority

point

(Verse ١٣)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنـثَى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوباً وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقـكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O' Humanity! Without doubt We have created you from a male and a female and“ have made you into various nations and tribes, so that you may come to know and understand one another. Definitely the most honoured among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most Allah-Consciousness. Surely Allah has full Knowledge and is ”.All-Aware

The issue of equality between all human beings, opposition to any type of racial, ancestral and class discrimination, fairness between all the children of Adam in relation to human rights and that no person is better than another due to his skin colour, language, lineage or race - is one of the most important societal issues in the .Qur'an which has been mentioned in various Ayat of this Heavenly Book

The Qur'an has denounced any sort of superiority - whether it be of race, language or skin colour and even today, this subject is one of the most complicated issues within the society which even in the most important industrial centres of

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.Usul al-Kafi, Volume ٢, Page ٣٥٧ -١

the world (such as America) is still a source of confusion and since the (the industrialized centres of the world) feel that this is an issue that can never be solved, they have brought this discussion to a close. The Qur'an explains this issue with simple logic and by explaining the origin and creation of man, clearly demonstrates that such an imaginary belief that one's race or colour is what makes him superior to .others is false

We see that from the beginning of this Surah to the present verse under discussion, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has addressed the people five times with the :phrase

يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

"...O' you who have true faith"

However in this verse, the sphere of those being addressed has been widened from "those who have true faith" to "humanity" in general – Muslims and non-Muslims alike. :Thus, in this verse, we read

O' Mankind! If you look through the files of creation of the entire humanity, you will" definitely see that the origin of all of these people is one and all of them have come from one male and one female (Adam and Hawa, peace be upon them both) and all descendants return back to these two people and thus, there is no criteria that can be .used to make one group of people better than another

If We have brought you forth as different groups and nations then it is not because you should have pride or conceit over the nation or family that

you have come from. Rather, it is through the different groups that you are to know one another and recognize each other (لِتَعٰارَفُوا). The secret behind this branching out (of humanity) is simply for attaining knowledge and recognition of one another and merely being attached to one family, but this should never be the basis and criteria for claiming superiority over another."

In order to condemn this fable of racial superiority and to negate this imaginary belief of preference of national supremacy and nationalism and to quiet any slogans of the ignorant people, the concept that all of us have been brought forth from one source has been mentioned in various chapters of the Qur'an as those mentioned below(1):

إِتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِی خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وٰاحِدَهٍ...

"Have taqwa (Allah-Consciousness) of your Lord (O' People) who created all of you from a single soul..."(2)

Just as the Qur'an has referred to the issue of superiority of one tribe over another as being a myth, even the difference in languages or the colour of skin are also not grounds for pride or vanity over one another.

It is both of these things (language and skin colour) which have been referred to as the signs (ayat) of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and a symbol of the power of the Creator so that we may recognize that we have come from one element and one source. It is through this chain of natural and inherent characteristics that there is a difference in the colour of

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1- Surah al-Nisa (۴), Verse ۱; Surah al-An`am (۶), Verse ۹۸; Surah al-Zumar (۳۹), Verse ۶.

2- Surah al-Nisa (۴), Verse ۱.

the skin of various people and that they speak various languages, just as has been :said

وَ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰاتِ وَ الأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاٰفُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَ أَلْوٰانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِى ذٰلِكَ لَآيٰاتٍ لِلْعٰالَمِـينَ

And of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and the difference in" your languages and your skin colours. Certainly there are signs in this for the people (of the worlds."(1)

The Question of Race and Language in the World Today102

point

Even though the world today has passed through many stages of industrialization, however they still have not been able to reach to even partial completion in the issues .(mentioned (in regards to the eradication of racism

Every year in the advanced centres of the world, the experts sit down to discuss this issue, while the flames of disagreement burn and in which people are pulled (into these flames of hatred). Today, in some of the largest and "most advanced" parts of the world, students, who due to a series of natural and ontological events that have taken place which lead to their skin being black, are not permitted to go to the same schools as those whose skin happens to be white, even if they are of the same religion .and country of origin

Today, if by accident a white person was to walk through the door of a movie theatre .that is specifically for black people only, they would be forced to pay a fine

In the present day in these industrialized countries, the surgical and medical treatment wards of the hospital are different for black

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.Surah al-Rum (30), Verse 22 -1

people and white people and the instruments and medicines that are used in the section reserved for whites would never be seen or used in the medical ward or surgical area for the blacks! In addition, those young doctors who come from overseas – who the Hospital Staff feel are still 'doctors in training' – do not have the right to treat white patients, however the doors to the black patients are wide open!

With the unjust distinctions and privileges which know no limit or boundary that exist within these nations, how is it possible for them to put out the call for freedom and refer to themselves as the pillars of liberty?!

In regards to the issue of the Declaration of Human Rights which was ratified after the French Revolution, or the Charter of Freedoms and Equality of Humanity which was penned after World War II and was signed by all of the major and influential world powers –we see that they still have not been able to bring this conflict to an end.

However on that day, in the sand filled country of Arabia and the gloomy and unenlightened world that existed at that time, a divine man and heavenly leader lifted up the call of true freedom and equality of all human beings and said, "In the presence of Allah and in His Court of Justice, a Leader from the tribe of Quraish is equal to a black Ethiopian."

(In order to reject and eliminate all of the (previous

incorrect traditions, the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) sent a comprehensive message to the societies that blood, nationality and .one's language are no reasons to show pride or conceit

The noble Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was a progeny of this same environment (of `Arabia) and was fully aware of both the ailments and the cures of the `Arab society. He knew the reasons for the decline of the people of Makkah and thus was able to place his finger on the societal ailments of the `Arab society and to completely cure their sicknesses. At this point, we present some of the words of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his .progeny) in which there is a cure for specific ailments with society

Having Pride of One's Relations, Family or Tribe .۱

Of the many illnesses that existed in the `Arab society which was also one of the biggest things for a person to boast about was being from a branch of one of the well-known tribes, such as that of the Quraish. In order to remove this fictitious element of greatness, the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) :stated the following

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذْهَبَ عَنْكُمْ نَخْوَةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ وَ تَفَاخُرَهَا بِآبَائِهَا أَلَا إِنَّكُمْ مِنْ آدَمَ و آدَمُ مِنْ طِينٍ. أَلَا إِنَّ خَيْرَ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ عَبْدٌ اتَّقَاهُ

O' Mankind! Surely Allah has removed the pride and conceit that existed within you" during the days of Ignorance

in relation to your fore-fathers. Surely all of you are from (Prophet) Adam and Adam was (created) from mud. Surely the best servant of Allah is that servant who has (consciousness of Him."(1)

In order for the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to announce to the world that the true criteria in judging a person is his level of taqwa (consciousness of Allah) and keeping away from sins, in a part of his speech, he divided all of mankind into two categories and said that their only greatness is the taqwa or consciousness of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) that people have. By dividing them in this method and grouping them in this way, he removed all of the :imaginary criteria that existed when he stated

إِنَّمَا النَّاسُ رَجُلاَنِ: مُؤْمِنٌ تَقِيٌّ كَرِيـمٌ عَلى اللّٰهِ وَ فَاجِرٌ شَقِيٌّ هَيِّنٌ عَلى اللّٰهِ

Certainly mankind is of two types: the true believer who has piety and nobility to" ".Allah; and the sinner, who is lost and despicable in the sight of Allah

The "Virtue" of Being an `Arab .2

The Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) knew that the `Arab nation considered their nationality and their descent from this race to be a major source of honour and pride. The vanity and conceit that the `Arabs possessed resembled a contagious disease that was deeply rooted in their hearts. In order to cure this sickness and to remove this imaginary greatness that they claimed to possess, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be

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.Sirah bin Hisham, Volume 2, Page 412; al-Kafi, Volume 8, Page 246 -1

:upon him and his progeny) once again turned towards the people and said to them

أَلاٌ إِنَّ الْعَرَبِيَّهَ لَيْسَتْ بٌابٌ وٌالِدٌ وَ لٌكِنَّهٌا لِسٌانٌ نٌاطِقٌ فَمَنْ قَصُرَ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ ىَـبْلُغْهُ حَسَبُهُ

Now then, surely your being `Arab is not the basis for your personality nor a part of“ your essence, rather, it is the language which you speak. So then whosoever is negligent in his actions, then the pride that he has from his father (being an `Arab) will not help him in the least and will not make up for the defects in his (religious) (actions).”(۱)

Is it possible to find a more eloquent and expressive statement than this? Truly the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was the genuine caller to freedom. However he did not stop at this. Rather, in order to strengthen the :equality of humanity and the society he said

إِنَّ النٌّاسَ مِنْ عَهْدِ آدَمَ إِلـى يَوْمِنٌا هٌذَا مَثَلُ أَسْنٌانِ الْمُشْطِ لاٌ فَضْلَ لِلْعَرَبِيِّ عَلى الْعَجَمِيِّ وَ لاٌ الأَحْمَرَ عَلى الأَسْوَدِ إِلاٌّ بِالتَّقْوى.

Surely all of mankind – from the time of Adam until our time – are like the teeth of a“ comb (all equal to one another) and there is no greatness for an `Arab over a non-`Arab and no greatness for a red-skinned person over a black-skinned person, (except due to one’s consciousness of Allah (taqwa).”(۲)

Through these words, the Noble Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) removed all sorts of distinctions and merits that knew no ends

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۱- Al-Kafi, Volume ۸, Page ۲۴۶.

۲- Ikhtisas, Volume ۳۴۱.

or boundaries, among the nations of the world. All of these areas which the Declaration of Human Rights or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms have not even .mentioned were addressed and put to rest in the Islamic sources

Not only did the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) accomplish this task through conveying the verses of the Qur'an and his speech (ahadith), rather, he was also able to stir up tension in the hearts of the defeated people of those days. In many instances within his practical life, he was able to make null and void the .nationalism and racism that was surrounding him

In order for him to reach to his aim of equality between all human beings, he married the daughter of his uncle to the slave he owned named Zaid. In addition, he give Bilal, who was both a non-`Arab and a black-skinned African slave (at one point in his life), the important religious post of being the Muaddhin or the one who made the call to prayer. He also commanded Ziyad ibn Labid who was one of the richest and noblest .men from amongst the Ansar to marry his daughter to a black slave named Jubair

Keeping in mind the outcome of the marriage of this man's daughter to the man she married and how these two people had come from completely opposite lifestyles, we see that this is one of the amazing stories of Islam and in reality shows the true equality

.between people of all levels of society who have sincere faith

It is appropriate at this point that we properly analyse, investigate and relate this event in brief, especially since this event has been mentioned in the most trustworthy (books of the Shi`a.(١)

The Most Amazing Marriage in History

Not even a few days has passed since the migration of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to the city of Madinah when a very enthusiastic man from the city of Yamamah came to the presence of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and accepted the teachings of the faith. This man had a pure heart and was a true believer with genuine sincerity.

As for his physical form, he was a short man who was not that handsome with a very dark, African complexion. In any case, he had needs, but did not have the means to supply for them, and he did not even possess suitable clothing on his body! The abject state of poverty of this man from Yamamah - whose name was Jubair - caught the attention of the blessed Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and it was his state which drew the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) closer to this poor man.

The Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) felt compassion for him due to his lack of proper clothing and since he

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١ - al-Kafi, Volume ٢, Page ٩; Tadhkirah, Volume ٢, Beginning of the discussion on Marriage (Nikah).

was away from his home land, gave him two pieces of clothing to cover himself up properly and also ordered the Muslims to give him one Sa` (۱) of wheat every day. His accommodation was also looked after as the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) gave him permission to live inside the Masjid with the other indigent and helpless Muslims.

Time passed by and this man from Yamamah continued his life in this manner. The more the teachings of Islam spread and extended outward into other regions, the more people who were far from their own home and had no possessions made their way to Madinah. Other than the Masjid, there was no other place of residence for these people and it was out of necessity that they were housed there. The Masjid was a place where Muslims gathered, a place of worship for the people of Madinah and the centre from where the true teachings of Islam were being spread.

It is clear that the state of these people was not something that could be tolerated and was not in agreement with the higher aims and goals of the Noble Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and his leadership and guidance (that they stay in a Masjid in the state that they were in). In any event, these men who had no family or possessions were taking up space for others and in addition, the Masjid in Madinah did not even have the

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۱- A weight of measurement equivalent to approximately ۳ kilograms.

.capacity to house so many people

At this time, the Revelation came to the Prophet and he was commanded to purify the Masjid of all forms of pollution and dirt and was told that all of the people who were given the chance to stay in the Masjid and sleep there were now to be removed from .(this sacred site at that very time (which was night-time

Even more than all of this, the command came that all of the doors of the Masjid that opened up into the houses of those who lived around this place of worship were to be sealed, with the exception of the Prophet's (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) door and the door of the house of `Ali and Fatimah (peace be upon them both). They were exempt from this ruling and this in itself was one of the distinctions .for these two noble personalities

The Noble Messenger (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) then went on to introduce new conditions to the community in stages and thus from this day forward, no one had the right to live inside the Masjid. However in this present state, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) did not forget these refugees and thus he ordered that a place be built for them which had a roof so that all could live in there together. The place that was built was known as Suffah and an uncountable number

of companions of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) would later go on to be known as the Ashab-e-Suffah or those companions of the Prophet .who lived under this sheltered housing

After all of this transpired, the normal habit of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was that he would pass on whatever food and clothing that was given to him to the people. Following the example of the Prophet, the Muslims too did not forget these people and whatever they had and were able to give was handed over to them. In this way, the Islamic society which at that time was quite small and did not have a large budget at their disposal, took care of those people who had no .help or security

As he usually did, one day the Prophet went to see the Ashab-e-Suffah. Amongst these companions, he noticed the man from Yamamah and said to the man, whose name was Jubair, "How good it would be for you to find a wife and get married and through this act, you would be able to get rid of the demonic temptations and also protect your own chastity, since your wife would help you in matters of this world and ".the next world

With complete politeness Jubair replied to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), "Is it possible that someone would develop a liking for me? I do not have any personal merit, nor

do I have any great lineage. I have no wealth nor do I possess beauty. Thus, what ”?kind of woman would be willing to marry me

The Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied, “O’ man! Through the religion of Islam, Allah brought those people who during the days of Ignorance felt that they were superior and excellent, to a level of humbleness and inferiority and those who during the days of Ignorance were abject and considered as insignificant (in the society) were given esteem and honour. By sending the religion of Islam, Allah the Most High has removed all sorts of pride, vanity, self-centeredness and the imaginary nobility that people felt for themselves during the days of .Ignorance

From today, one’s tribe or clan, descent or lineage and any other prejudice that stem from ignorance have no value or worth. Today all men - black and white, Quraish and non-Quraish, `Arab and non-`Arab are all equal. Everyone that exists – no matter what nationality they are and in whatever state, are all the children of Adam and .Adam was created from dirt

In the Last Days, only those people who are more conscious of Allah (have taqwa) than others, those who are the foremost in their servitude and obeying the orders of ”.Allah will be the ones who will be blessed with the kindness, grace and mercy of Allah

The heavenly words of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) took such a

place in the heart of the man from Yamamah that the spiritual rays of the Prophet's words opened the doors of cognizance and true belief in him. By hearing these words, the true meaning of justice and the actual interpretation of fair dealings was made .incarnate for him

Upon hearing these words of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) which he listened to with great attentiveness, such that it could be said that every word of the divine words brought up an image of the reality and pure truth (of Islam) and in the presence of this strong logic, Jubair had no other choice but to remain quiet and it is possible that may have he felt remorseful and guilty for that .short sentence which he said to the Prophet

At this time, the Prophet told the man from Yamamah to get up and go to Ziyad ibn Labid who happened to be one of the most noble people of the tribe of Bani Bayadhha and tell him, "I have brought a message from the Messenger of Allah to you. The Prophet has told me that I am to convey to you that the Messenger of Allah commands you to marry your daughter whose name is Dhulayfa, to the man named ".Jubair – which is me

The man from Yamamah got up and made his way to convey the message of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to Ziyad ibn Labid. When

he reached the house, he saw Ziyad and a group of his family and close relatives in the house sitting together. He asked permission to enter which he was given and then .proceeded to enter and greet the people present

At this time, Ziyad and those present with him took notice of Jubair and wanted to know why this poor man from Yamamah wanted – who was always known to them as one of the companions of the Suffah and whom people such as these (rich, affluent `Arabs) would naturally look at as being a contemptible and low person who .possessed the frame and physical features that he did

Jubair said, "O' Ziyad! I have brought a message to you from the Messenger of Allah! This message is in relation to myself – should I proclaim it in the open or in private (to "?(you

Ziyad, who could not even think that this man from Yamamah had any needs said, "Why should you say it in private? Speak it out! I am honoured to hear the message of "!the Prophet of Allah

Jubair said, "The Prophet has commanded that you are to marry your daughter ".Dhulayfa to Jubair

Ziyad, who was not anticipating to hear such a message, with complete shock and surprise said, "Are you truthful that the Noble Prophet has sent you here for this "?reason

Jubair said, "Yes! I have never attributed a lie to the Messenger of Allah!" Ziyad said, "I (only) marry my daughters to those people who are equal

and at their same status that we are at and that too from the people of the Ansar. Jubair! You may go back and let me go see the Prophet and convey my apologies to ".him

Jubair returned back in a state of confusion and said to himself that, "I swear by Allah! The Qur'an does not condone or sanction the actions of this man, nor was the intention of the apostleship of Muhammad (blessings of Allah be upon him and his ".progeny) for this

Dhulayfa, the daughter of Ziyad was behind the curtain (in the room) and was witness to all that had transpired and heard the final words that her father said to this man from Yamama. These words of her father weighed heavily upon her and it could be said that the faith and belief that she had in the Prophet deep in her heart had been .rebuked

Therefore, she immediately sent a person to go to her father and from behind the curtains (in her room) she summoned her father and reproached him saying, "My dear father! What is this that I heard you saying? Why did you speak to this person that "?was sent by the Prophet as you did

Ziyad replied, "Did you not hear what that man said? With the state that he is in, he claimed that the Prophet had sent him to me and was commanding me to marry my ".daughter Dhulayfa - you – to himself

Dhulayfa said, "I heard what he said, however

I swear by Allah that Jubair is not the type of person who would openly lie against the Prophet. In any case, he was sent by the Prophet and he definitely tells the truth. You must immediately send someone to catch up to Jubair before he reaches the Prophet ".and conveys your reply to him and ask him to return here

Up until this point, it was as if Ziyad was in a deep slumber which his daughter had to wake him up from and without any questions, he immediately sent a person to go after the man from Yamamah and requested him to return. Jubair returned to the house, though Ziyad did not pay attention to the change in the mental state and confusion that Jubair was in, with open arms, he welcomed him and said, "Jubair! ".Thank you for coming! I request you to stay here for a little while until I return

Ziyad left him in the house and went to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and told him, "O' Messenger of Allah! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Jubair brought your message to me and told me that you had commanded me to marry my daughter Dhulayfa to him, however I did not show my pleasure or happiness to him and thought that I should come and speak to you that .which I feel is necessary

Our custom is that we give our daughters in marriage to a

person who, from the point of view of his nobility, honour and other aspects, is at the same status of us. Therefore, in the future, a person from the Ansar who possesses these traits will be the husband of my daughter."

The Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) replied, "Jubair is a Muslim man and a believer and in the teachings of Islam a Muslim man is the equal to a Muslim woman and any believing man is at the same status as a believing woman. Therefore, Jubair is the equal (in societal status) to your daughter and therefore, you must get them married as soon as possible and there is nothing that can excuse you from this order."

Seeing as how Ziyad was not able to have his way (with the Prophet), he returned to his house and went directly to his daughter and told her what the Prophet said to him. His daughter replied, "Therefore, there is no choice but to comply with the order. If I go against the Prophet, then I will become a disbeliever."

Ziyad came out of his house, took the hand of Jubair and took him to the elders and seniors of his tribe, and in their presence, married his daughter to him. The Mahr (dowry) which had been specified by the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and was agreed upon was the traditional Mahr of ۵۰۰ dirham. After this, the preparations for the

wedding celebration were made and the gifts that were to be given to his daughter .were purchased

The message was then passed on to Jubair that his wife was now ready for him and at this point, he was asked if he had a house. Jubair replied, “No, by Allah! I do not have my own house.” The order was then given that a house should be given to the bride and her husband and all the necessities of the house – whatever they needed – were gathered together. Two new pieces of clothing were also given to Jubair and the .bride was brought to her new home in a special manner

Jubair entered into the bridal chamber, however contrary to his expectations, he was not happy at what he saw. He looked towards his wife and then glanced around the bedroom. Looking around, he saw the gold, ornaments, rug, curtains which had all been perfumed with musk and amber which really astonished him. Without saying a word or paying any attention to his wife, he took a place in the room and until the rising of the sun, was busy in the recitation of the Qur’an and Salat. He heard the sound of the Adhan from the Masjid of the Prophet at the time of Fajr and thus made his way to the Masjid, while his wife made her Wudhu and performed her Salat at .home

In the morning, the ladies of the city all made their way to her

house and being impatient as they were, wanted to hear about the night that she spent with her new husband. They proclaimed, “Dhulayfa! Did your husband come to you last night?” In a state of embarrassment, Dhulayfa said to them, “No. From the beginning of the night until morning, he was busy in the recitation of the Qur’an and in the performance of the Salat and at the breaking of dawn when he heard the Adhan, ”.he went to the Masjid

The same event that happened on the first night transpired on the second night as well and during these two days, there was no physical contact between the husband and wife; however the ladies and close family members of the bride did not mention .any of this to the bride’s father

The third night ended in the same way as the first two nights and at this point, the women broke their seal of silence and told Dhulayfa’s father of what had happened. Ziyad proceeded to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and said to him: “O’ Messenger of Allah! May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! You commanded me to marry my daughter to Jubair even though he was in no way compatible with us and was not equal to us and we still obeyed your commands and in whatever way possible, we sent the bride on her way and brought the bride to the ”.home of our son-in-law

The Prophet said, “Congratulations! But

”?have you seen something bad from him

Ziyad said, “This man had absolutely nothing to his name, I gave all the necessities for his house to him and gave my daughter in submission to him, however I did not ”!expect him to act in the way that he has

”?The Prophet replied, “What has he done

Ziyad said, “Nothing. On the night of the wedding, Jubair entered into the room and without even paying any attention to my daughter, with a sad face, he sat in a corner of the room until the morning busy in the recitation of the Qur’an and in the performance of Salat and at the time of Fajr, he left the house. The second night was just the same as the first, however his actions were kept hidden from me. The third night passed the same as the first two nights and it was at this time that the news was given to me and now, I am coming to you so that you can intervene in this matter. This present state of affairs cannot be tolerated! I think that this man does not possess .any sexual desire and has no liking for women.” Ziyad finished his talk and left

The Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) called Jubair and asked him, “Do you not have any liking for women?” Jubair replied, “Of course I do – am I not ”.a man? Incidentally, I have a strong inclination for women

The Prophet replied, “However I have

been given reports that run contrary to this. I have been informed that you have been given a magnificent house will all the things that you would need including a beautiful daughter who dresses up for you and just like the branch of a flower, she is perfumed and sweet smelling, however you entered the bedroom with a grim look on your face ”?and did not even say one word to her! Has an unexpected event come upon you

Jubair replied, “O’ Messenger of Allah! For many years I was alone in the Suffah. All of a sudden after my marriage, my eyes were opened to a wide, spacious house with all types of items and necessities of life and a beautiful, sweet smelling wife has been given to me. In this state, that condition that I had passed many years through came to my mind. The thoughts of poverty and misery and nakedness, being alone without anyone, living amongst the poor, destitute – all of these things came back to me one after the other. I saw it far from being just that before I make use of all these .blessings that I have been given, without first thanking Allah

It is because of this in order to thank Him and get closer to Allah, I took a corner of the room to myself and from night until morning, was busy in the recitation of the Qur’an, Ruku and Sujud; and while in the state of Sujud I would thank

Allah as much as possible until I heard the sound of the Adhan and at this time, I would leave the house. I would spend the whole day in fasting until the breaking of .the fast and I continued this act for the past three days

Through all of this, I have humbled and put myself to shame in the presence of Allah and have considered these acts of mine as being trivial. However today I will put these acts to an end and tonight, with the permission of Allah, I will make my wife ".pleased with me

After hearing the words of Jubair, the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) called Ziyad to come to him and what he had heard from Jubair was related to Ziyad. When Ziyad and his entire family heard this, they became extremely happy and these words (of Jubair from the Prophet) relieved all of the discomfort and .distress that they felt

That day passed on and the night of the fourth started, however in reality, this was the first night of their marriage. Jubair was faithful to the promise that he had made .and the new groom and his bride started their happy, pleasant life together

By acting in this manner, the Noble Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was trying to make it known to the unruly people of his time and even of today, that not only have we been commanded to destroy the stone

and mud idols, rather even all of the irrational idols of distinction and class supremacy .must be removed

Yes! This unequalled marriage was the centre of attention for all of the people of Madinah – in fact for all of the Muslims - which formulated and made strong the spiritual power and influence of the Prophet and also brought some of the programs .and plans of the religion of Islam to the practical level

The popularity and talk that came about from this marriage had not even stopped, when the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) dispatched a group of companions towards the battle front. Jubair who had been recently married was sent and it was during this battle that he was killed and was blessed to drink from the cup of martyrdom. His beautiful wife Dhulayfa, was thrown into mourning for the death of her husband. However, after this, Dhulayfa, like the other women did not stay a widow, rather, she received proposals from Muslims everywhere and more .than any other woman, people wanted to marry her

?Why is Allah Consciousness (Taqwa) the Criteria for Excellence

We must find out what the roots and conditions which relate to the soul and spirit are that make one person better than another. In other words, from the true factor that makes up a person which is his soul, we must take lessons and we must never look at wealth, property, nationality, colour or status in the world, possession of children or genealogy in relation to other tribes or

groups of people or individuals as being the true visage of what makes up a person's character and status. These are all far and separated from the truth and thus none of .these play any role in the character or the greatness of a person

Yes! The noble ethical traits and lofty spiritual characteristics such as truthfulness, love, nobility and friendship or cognizance (of Allah) which truly bring about the unity of a person with his soul are the criteria which must be used to determine the greatness of an individual. It is these characteristics which if united together within .someone truly make up his humanity and spiritual character

However all of the outward, apparent characteristics of a person cannot lead to a good demeanour of one, if they are not accompanied with the characteristic of consciousness of Allah (Taqwa) and keeping away from sins, which in reality means that one observes and maintains the rights of both Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) .and humanity

This is said because each of these lofty humanistic traits can only be classified as a pride for the person when he does not trample upon the rights that he must observe in relation to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and the people around him. In other than this, not only can these traits not be classified as a pride for the person, rather, they would be categorized as him stepping over the boundaries and would actually be .negative moral traits for him

point

(Verse ۱۴)

قَالَتِ الأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لاَ يَلِتْكُم مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

The Desert `Arabs (come to you O' Muhammad) and say 'We have true belief!' Say to" them (O' Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that, 'You are not true believers, rather you have only submitted (to Allah), since true faith has not yet entered into your hearts. However if you were to obey Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) then nothing would be ".' reduced from your good deeds. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful

The axis of discussion of this verse revolves around a group of people who were "apparently" Muslims that were pretending to be of those who submitted and had true !faith - however not even the smallest amount of faith existed in their hearts

This group is known as the hypocrites whose danger is much more serious than that of others, since the Jews and Christians are the known and apparent enemies of Islam; however the hypocrites are the undistinguishable enemies. Thus, the damage and injury that people at this level can inflict is much greater than the other group ((Jews and Christians)(۱)

By studying the verses of the Qur'an in which the words 'Islam' and 'Iman' are mentioned in their various forms, one can reach to the conclusion that in most cases, (the word 'Islam' (submission

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۱- This topic has been thoroughly explained by this author in his commentary of Surah al-Munafiqun under verse number ۴ that reads: هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ ... "They are your enemies so then beware of them..."

is used as an opposite to 'Shirk' (polytheism) and 'Iman' (true faith) is used as an opposite to 'Kufr' (disbelief) and 'Fisq' (wickedness).

The lexical meaning of the word Islam is 'submission and humility'; while the lexical meaning of the word Iman is 'assurance and confidence'. Therefore, the meaning of Islam in the language of the Divine teachings is the state of humility and submission to the Creator of the Universe and that which is opposite to this is Shirk (polytheism) and Ilhad (atheism). It should also be mentioned that an atheist is not humble or submissive to anything, whereas a Mushrik (polytheist) submits to idols, bodies or things that have been fashioned by one's own hands.

Seeing as to how during the time when the Qur'an was being revealed, the meaning of a Mulhid (atheist) was a person who did not believe in a Creator, in most cases, the word Islam was used as an opposite to Shirk and a Muslim was used as an opposite to a Mushrik. Pay attention to the following verses of the Qur'an:

قُلْ إِنِّی أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَکُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلاٌ تَکُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِکِی_نَ

"Say (O' Muhammad): "Certainly I have been commanded to be the first of those who submit (to Allah (in Islam)) and unquestionably not to be of those who join (gods) with Allah."(1)

فَإِلٌهُکُمْ إِلَهٌ وٌاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِ_تِینَ

"So then your god is One God: submit then your will (entire presence) to Him (in Islam): and give the good news (O' Muhammad)

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1- Surah al-An`am (6), Verse 14.

(to those who humble themselves."(1)

مَّا كَّانَ إِبْرَّاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلاَّ نَصْرَّانِيًّا وَلَّكِنْ كَّانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَّا كَّانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِي_نَ

Prophet) Ibrahim was not a Jew, nor was he a Christian; but he was true in faith)" (Hanif) and he bowed his will (entire presence) to Allah (in Islam), and he was not of (those who joined gods (with Allah)."(2)

نَعْبُدُ إِلَّ_هَكَ وَإِلَّ_هَ آبَّائِكَ إِبْرَّاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَّاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَقَ إِلَّ_هاً وَّاحِداً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

We shall worship your God and the God of your fathers, of Ibrahim and Isma`il and" (Ishaq - the one (True) God (Allah) and to Him do we all submit (in Islam)."(3)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَّا إِلَّهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

Say (O' Muhammad): 'That which has been revealed to me (from Allah) is that your" God is the One God (Allah): will you then be of those who submit to him as Muslims (in (Islam)?"(4)

لاَّ شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ بِذَّالِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَ أَنَّا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

He has no partners and to this I have been commanded and I am the first of those" (who submit (one of the Muslims)."(5)

لاَّ إِلَّ_هَ إِلاَّ الَّذِى آمَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَّائِيلَ وَأَنَّا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

There is no god except Him Whom the Children of Isra'il believe in and I am one of" (those who submit (to Allah in Islam)."(6)

By paying close attention to these verses that present the meaning of Islam and all the derivatives that come from this word, we see that truly this word means humility (to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He

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1- Surah al-Hajj (22), Verse 34.

۲- Surah Aali Imran (۳), Verse ۶۷.

۳- Surah al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۳۳.

۴- Surah al-Anbiya’ (۲۱), Verse ۱۰۸.

۵- Surah al-An`am (۶), Verse ۱۶۳.

۶- Surah Yunus (۱۰), Verse ۹۰.

.and turning away from all forms of polytheism and diverging thoughts

Seeing as to how the worship of the One Creator and abandoning any sort of polytheism and not paying heed to any created object, is the fundamental belief of all of the Heavenly Teachings, it is because of this fact that from the very first day that mankind was created, there has never been more than one true religion and that is :al-Islam, just as it is mentioned in the Qur'an

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الإِسْلاٰمُ

Unquestionably the only Din (complete code and way of life) acceptable to Allah is al-" (Islam."(١)

وَ مَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الإِسْلاٰمِ دِيناً فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

And whoever chooses other than al-Islam as his Din - then it will never be accepted" (from him."(٢)

Given that the Qur'an wishes to invite the followers of the Injil and the Tawrat to one common goal and aim, all of humanity have been invited towards al-Islam. In addition, the reality of Islam is that the followers do not turn to polytheism and the :worship of idols, as it has been mentioned in the Qur'an

...أَلاَّ نَعْبُدَ إِلاَّ اللَّهَ وَلاٰ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلاٰ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضاً أَرْبَاباً مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

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that we shall not worship any other creature or entity other than Allah and we shall... not setup with Him partners and we will not take some people over us as lords other than Allah.' So

then if they turn away (and do not accept these

.Surah Aali Imran (٣), Verse ١٩ -١

.Ibid., Verse ۸۵ -۲

things) then say to them (O' Muhammad

"'.(that 'Bear witness surely we are of those who submit (as Muslims (

(1)

Again, since the reality of Islam is to worship Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and to turn away from everything other than Him, and during all times and ages this is what mankind has been commanded to follow, we see that even after building the Ka`bah, Prophet Ibrahim al-Khalil al-Rahman (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) to make him and his children Muslims, when he said:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَينِ لَکَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّیَّـتِـنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَکَ

"O' our Lord! Make us from those who submit to You (as Muslims) and also (make) our children to be from the nation of submitters (Muslims) to You."(2)

The Qur'an also holds firm to the belief that Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) had named those people who worshipped Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) from a previous time as being Muslims:

هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمَينِ مِنْ قَبْلُ

"It is he (Ibrahim) who called you Muslims from before."(3)

From these verses of the Qur'an, we can deduce that the truth of Islam and the principle goal of this religion (in the instances that have been elucidated to in these verses) is submission and obedience in the presence of the Truth which takes form in the worship of One God (Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He).

It goes without saying that the centre for this form of true submission which is also the basis through which

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۱- Ibid., Verse ۶۴.

۲- Surah al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۲۸.

۳- Surah al-Hajj (۲۲), Verse ۷۸.

one is saved from the fire of hell and is graced with the bounties of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) is the heart and the soul of the person. Therefore, a Muslim is one who is humble and submissive from the bottom of his heart towards Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and does not accept anyone or anything other than Him at the level of .Lordship

The first part of the body that this manifests itself on to is the tongue of the person (through the verbal declaration), followed by the other parts of the body. Therefore the true meeting point of submission and obedience is the heart and soul of a person .and the tongue is simply the faculty through which it is made known

’Analysis of the Word ‘Iman

In the Qur’an, the word Iman (true faith) is used as an opposite to the word Kufr (disbelief). A point that must be mentioned in relation to this is that Iman is a mental state of believing and accepting something. With this said, we see that Kufr is in the meaning of covering up something and thus is the opposite of Iman. It is said that through his own disregard and denial (of the Truth), a disbeliever covers up the true :visage of the Truth and in this relation, the Qur’an states

وَ مَنْ يَتَبَدَّلِ الْكُفْرَ بِالإِى_مٌانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوٌاءَ السَّبِى_لِ

But whoever changes from true faith (Iman) to disbelief (Kufr) has definitely strayed“ ”.from the correct way

(۱)

هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلإِيْمٌانِ

On“

.Surah al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۰۸ -۱

(that day, they were nearer to disbelief (Kufr)than they were to true faith (Iman)."(۱)

إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلى الإِيْمَانِ

(If they love disbelief (Kufr) over true faith (Iman)."(۲)"

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ

(They have true faith (Iman) in Allah and the Last Day."(۳)"

أَلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ

(Those people who have true faith (Iman) in the unseen and uphold the Salat."(۴)"

وَكَذَالِكَ أَنْزَلْـنَا إِلَـيْكَ الْكِتَابَ فَـالَّذِينَ آتَيْـنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ

And thus (it is) We that have sent down the Book (al-Qur'an) to you (O' Muhammad)."
(So, the people who have been given the book have true faith therein."(۵)

The conclusion that we arrive at by studying these verses is that the intended meaning of Islam in the language of the Qur'an is submission and humility in the presence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He); while Shirk is classified as humility in the presence of idols – which are made from the things that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) Himself has created.

The meaning of Iman in the Qur'an is voluntary submission and obedience to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and those things which are connected to Him such as the Prophetic Mission of the Prophets, the Day of Judgement, the Heavenly books and other (such) things and this is the opposite to Kufr in which all of these things or even some of them are denied and not accepted.

If the true visage of Islam is submission and attestation, then without doubt the true focal point of these two states

۱- Surah Aali Imran (۳), Verse ۱۶۷.

۲- Surah at-Tawbah (۹), Verse ۲۳.

۳- Surah Aali Imran (۳), Verse ۱۱۴.

۴- Surah al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۲.

۵- Surah al-` Ankabut (۲۹), Verse ۴۷.

is the ruh (spirit) and the soul of a person, and the tongue and other parts of one's body are the places where the physical manifestations of these two states are made.

However, if the meaning of these two words is simply to show or demonstrate one's submission and obedience even though in the heart and deep down in the soul of the person, there are no effects present – just as we find people in whose hearts there is no effect of submission or obedience, however by their words they act as if they are submitting and obedient to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) – then in this event the manifestation of submission and obedience will simply remain on their tongues. In some of the verses of the Qur'an, this sort of external or apparent form of Islam and dishonest Iman has been mentioned.

In relation to the cause of revelation of the verse under discussion, the Commentators of the Qur'an have narrated that a group of people from the tribe of Bani Asad came to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to ask permission to use the Zakat and they made known to the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that they had true faith in him (they had Iman). Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commanded the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to say to them that, "You have accepted Islam (not Iman),

".since true faith has not yet entered into your hearts

It goes without saying that just as Iman had not entered into their hearts, so too Islam (submission) had also not entered into their hearts and their submission or acceptance of Islam was nothing more than a verbal attestation. However, why is it that the Prophet told them: "Do not say that you have true faith (Iman), rather say that you have submitted (accepted Islam)" since from the apparent point of view they had accepted Islam and Iman, however deep down inside themselves, they had .neither Iman nor Islam? We will elaborate upon these points later on

:In the Qur'an, there are some verses which speak about verbal faith such as

لاٌ يَحْزُنْکَ الَّذِينَ يُسّارِعُونَ فِی الْکُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قٌالُوا آمَنّٰا بِأَفْوٰاهِهِمْ وَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ

O' Muhammad!) Do not let those people grieve you who race each other into)" disbelief (Kufr) (if it be) among those who say "We believe" with their mouths but ".(whose hearts have no true faith (Iman

(۱)

From this discussion, it is clear that the true focal point of Islam and Iman is the heart and soul of a person and the tongue is the place where the physical manifestation of these two traits takes place. Sometimes however, it is possible that the true physical manifestation of Islam and Iman do not occur and the presence of Islam and Iman is .not made known within the depths of a person

Therefore, opposed to what some people may imagine, Iman

.Surah al-Maidah (۵), Verse ۴۱ -۱

is not particularly related to the heart and Islam is not particularly related to the tongue (verbal confirmation) - rather both of these, both from the inner and the outer .aspects - are of various degrees and levels

’Another Meaning of ‘Islam’ and ‘Iman

The popular and prevalent meaning of these two terms are just as have been mentioned, however there are some other verses of the Qur’an and ahadith that .offer another interpretation of them, of which we mention some of them here

Sometimes Islam is defined as the physical submission, whereas Iman is limited .۱ specifically to the ethereal beliefs and these are the meanings of these two words when they are used together as opposites to one another. The person who is hearing these words is in a position where he must separate (two things from themselves), as .can be seen in the verse under discussion

In this verse, we see that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) had been commanded by Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) to tell the people from the tribe of Bani Asad who had come to him to ask permission to use the Zakat and outwardly showed that they had accepted the faith. It was here that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was commanded to tell them that .(they had accepted Islam (submission), but not Iman (true faith

This sentence clearly shows that by attributing Islam to these people, they had traversed one of the stages and levels

of Islam which was the verbal submission but not all of the levels that Islam entails. Also by negating any sort of Iman that they possessed, this negation was only in relation to some of the stages and levels of Iman of which the hidden or true faith of the heart is that which was negated from these people and not all the levels of Iman. This is the case since we see that from the apparent aspect they had accepted Islam and they also had Iman, however if we looked at what was deep in their hearts, they neither had Islam nor Iman.

It is possible that the reason why these two words are used in this fashion is that the most clear area of manifestation of submission (to Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He) is the tongue and the most natural part of the body in which Iman would be made manifest is the soul and spirit of a person. Due to this, in the verse under discussion we see that the word Islam is simply the Islam of the tongue and Iman is the Iman of the spirit; and because of this, it is correct to state that one of these confirms the other one, while the other one negates the first one.

۲. Islam is a phrase that is confessed by the tongue and is linked to the beliefs that one has in his heart. However in regards to Iman, in addition to this (definition), it also entails

acting according to one’s responsibilities (of the religion) and this is the meaning that .has been specified in the ahadith

Muhammad ibn Muslim has narrated from either Imam Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Baqir or Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon them both) that it was said:

أَلاِی_مٌانُ إِقْرٌارٌ وَ عَمَلٌ وَ الإِسْلاٌمُ إِقْرٌارٌ بِلاٌعَمَلٍ

“Iman is the confession (by the tongue) and acting (according to one’s responsibility) and Islam is confession (by the tongue) without acting.”(١)

In a letter which Imam `Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (peace be upon him) wrote to Ma’mun, he summarized Islam by stating the following:

وَأَصْحٌابُ الْحُدُودِ مُسْلِمُونَ لاٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَ لاٌ كٌافِرُونَ

“The people upon whom the punishment of Allah must be meted out are the Muslims, not those who have true faith (Mu’minun), nor the disbelievers (Kafirun).”(٢)

However, these people (of the tribe of Bani Asad) are Muslims, since both in their heart and through their tongue they had testified to the truthfulness of the religion of Islam, however they were not true believers (Mu’minun).

This is said because the foundation of Islam is based on acting according to the injunctions of the religion whereas a person who commits a sin that necessitates the punishment that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has prescribed has naturally trampled upon a series of responsibilities that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has placed for him.

Building up on this interpretation, there is a well-known hadith which has been narrated in the books of the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shi`a that states:

لاٌ يَسْرِقُ السٌّارِقُ

p: ١٩٨

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۶۸, Page ۲۴۶.

۲- Ibid., Page ۲۶۲.

حِیْنَ یَسْرِقُ وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَ لاٌ یَزْنِــی الزٌّانِی حِیْنَ یَزْنِــی وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ.

At the time that a thief is stealing and (at the time that) an adulterer is committing“ (adultery, he is not a Believer.”(١)

In this interpretation, Iman has been sited as an opposite to sin and rebellion (against the laws of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He) and Islam has been used as an opposite .to Kufr or disbelief

Within the definition of Iman, in addition to Islam being one of the conditions, . ٣ Wilayah (recognizing the true successors of the Messenger of Allah, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) is also a prerequisite. After mentioning the definition of Islam as being the confession to Tawhid (Oneness of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He) and the Prophetic Mission of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and fulfilling one's religious obligations, Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad :as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) went on to say

أَلاِی ـمٌانُ مَعْرِفَهُ هٌذٌا الأَمْرِ مَعَ هٌذٌا فَإِنْ أَقَرَّ بِهٌا وَ لَمْ یَعْرِفْ هٌ ـذٌا الأَمْرِ كٌانَ مُسْلِماً وَ كٌانَ ضٌالاًّ

Iman (means) to recognize and believe in this issue (Wilayah of us, the Ahlul Bait) and“ if one testifies to this but does not recognize this issue (the Wilayah of the Ahlul Bait), (then he is a Muslim and he is misguided.”(٢)

Investigating a Long Running Dispute

The dispute as to the reality of what Islam and Iman are is a dispute that is long running. The great teacher of the Shi`a, late Shaikh Mufid

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.Ibid., Page ٢٧٠ -١

.Usul al-Kafi, Volume ٢, Page ٢۴ -٢

may Allah be pleased with him) in his precious work Awail al-Muqalat(١) has clearly) explained the opinion of the Shi`a. Also, the late scholar `Allamah Majlisi (may Allah be pleased with him), in his discussion on Kufr and Iman(٢), has brought forth both verses of the Qur'an and ahadith in relation to this dispute. However we bring this discussion to a close by quoting the words of Shahid ath-Thani (may Allah be pleased :(with him

The difference of opinion amongst the Scholars in relation to the meaning of these :two words can be divided into three categories

Issue ١: Do the words Islam and Iman, from the point of view of their purport and ?subject have a different (lexical) meaning or is their substance one and the same

The answer to this question was made clear in the beginning of this discussion since these two words, from the point of view of their lexical meaning have two distinct and different meanings. The reality of Islam is humility, while the definition of Iman is submission, confirmation and voluntary obedience to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). With this said, how is it possible to say that the original meaning of these two words – whether from the point of view of their lexical meaning or how they are used ?in the religion – are one and the same

Issue ٢: In the meanings of these two words, is there a sense of sharing of a common ground or not? By this we mean that is

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.Page ١٥ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۶٨, Page ٢٢۵-٣٠١ -٢

?every true Muslim also a true Mu’min and vice-versa or not

Answer: If this question is related to the common and prevalent meaning of these two words, then without doubt the meanings of them would lead us to accept that there is a relationship and both mean the same thing, since if someone is humble and submits himself to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), then certainly between himself and that which is related to him (his body parts), there will also be submission. There are some :verses of the Qur’an which show that both of these words are equal in meaning

فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Then We brought forth such as were therein of the believers. But We did not find“ (therein save a (single) house of those who submitted (the Muslims).”(۱

However, if this question is related to the final three meanings that were mentioned, then without doubt the relationship between these two words is that they share some commonality but also have their own independent meanings. By this we mean that everyone who has true faith (Iman) is a Muslim, however not all Muslims have true .(faith (Iman

In the first definition that was given for Iman, it was mentioned that Iman is a firm belief which is rooted in the heart, whereas in the second definition, it was mentioned that Iman is to fulfil one’s responsibilities. The third interpretation was that Iman means to recognize and accept the rightful successors

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.Surah al-Dhariyat (۵۱), Verse ۳۵ ۳۶ -۱

of the Prophet; whereas for one to be considered a Muslim, none of these three .things are necessary

Issue ٣. Are the issues that are related to the practical laws of Islam such as purity (taharah), one's life and wealth being sacrosanct (from other Muslims) and the permissibility to eat meat that has been slaughtered by such a person and the other rulings in Islam specific to the one who has Iman or even to the one who professes ?Islam

Answer: If this question is related to the common and prevalent meaning of these two words, then we must state that the issue of the practical laws of Islam are simply related to submission and the apparent obedience to Islam. Thus, it is not necessary to delve deep into the inner submission of the heart and true acceptance of the .teachings

However if this question is in relation to the other three meanings of these two words, especially the first meaning that Islam is related to the apparent testimony and that faith is an internal issue rooted in the heart, then it must be stated that the practical laws of Islam are limited to only that – Islam – not Iman. This reality can easily be seen by looking through the history of the life of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be .upon him and his progeny) and the ahadith of his successors

In the beginning days of Islam, anyone was able to openly testify to their acceptance of Islam even if they

did not have such a belief in their hearts and their submission was accepted and the laws of Islam were applicable to them. Imam Ja`far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said:

أَلإِسْلاٰمُ يُحْقَنُ بِهِ الدَّمُ وَ تُؤَدّی بِهِ الأَمٰانَهُ وَ يُسْتَحَلُّ بِهِ الْفَرْجُ وَ الثَّوٰابُ عَلی الإِی_مٰانِ.

"One who accepts Islam, his blood will be sanctified (he cannot be killed); anytime he gives you a trust, it must be returned; and (sexual) relations are made permissible (after marriage), however the reward (from Allah) is limited to Iman (true faith)."(1)

In another tradition, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has said:

أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُقٰاتِلَ النّٰاسَ حَتَّ_ی يَقُولُوا لاٰ إِلٰهَ إِلاّٰ اللّٰهَ فَإِذٰا قٰالُوهٰا فَقَدْ حَرُمَ عَلَيَّ دِمٰاؤُهُمْ وَ أَمْوٰالُهُمْ

"I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no creature or entity worthy of worship except for Allah, and when they say this then at that time, their blood and property are sacrosanct."(2)

Self-Sacrifice in Order to Reach One's Objectives

point

(Verse 15)

إِنَّمٰا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتٰابُوا وَجٰاهَدُوا بِأَمْوٰالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِی سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ أُوْلٰئِکَ هُمُ الصّٰادِقُونَ

"Without doubt the true believers are only those who have faith in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) and then do not change their belief into doubt, and (the believers are those) who struggle with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. Surely it is these people alone who are the truthful ones."

The style of the Qur'an is such that when discussing an issue, it puts forth the

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1- Al-Mahasin, Page 285.

2- Bihar al-Anwar, Volume 68, Page 262.

clearest proofs and it follows this method when it elucidates on the practical laws and issues related to society. Within its communications, the Qur'an also introduces both logical proofs and the traits which are within our innate disposition and in a majority of (instances, its directives are not propounded as simply matters of submission.(١)

Many times during the course of a person's research, a scholar will view a verse of the Qur'an as an isolated, independent issue, separate from that which came before it. However after careful study, he will realize that the issue which he is studying is not independent; rather the aim and intention of the contents of the verse he was studying was to elucidate and draw his attention to a previously mentioned fact, and .this point is absolutely clear for the person who has a deep love for the Qur'an

The verse under discussion is of this type and although the plan and design of this verse is to explain some of the signs of a person of true faith, however in reality it :explains the causes why the tribe of Bani Asad must say

أَسْلَمْنَا وَ لَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الإِيْمَانُ فِى قُلُوبِكُمْ

Rather say) that we submit (as Muslims) since true faith has not yet entered into)" ".your hearts

Why does the Qur'an say this? It is because people who possess true faith can be :distinguished through the following characteristics

They have firm faith in Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His Messenger . ١ (blessings of Allah be upon

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By this, it is meant that when the Qur'an speaks on various issues, it does not make -١ the issue as one that we must accept without proof or logical arguments and as simply being commandments that we must follow as Muslims – or those who submit to the word of Allah - rather, the Qur'an tries to explain issues to us through proofs .(.and reasoning that our minds would understand and accept. (Tr

.him and his progeny) and this is deeply rooted in the bottom of their hearts

.They do not allow doubt or scepticism to enter into their hearts .۲

.(They offer sacrifices in the way of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He .۳

Were these characteristics within them (the tribe of Bani Asad)? Without doubt, they were not. This was said because the outward show of their actions illustrated that they had not yet developed true faith in the bottom of their hearts and there was still doubt and scepticism in them and thus, they were not willing to give up their life and .(wealth in the way of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He

:Now, we offer an explanation of the third characteristic

One of the signs of a person who possesses true faith is that he is unselfish and self-sacrificing. Such a person is constantly struggling with his life and property toward his goals and the action and behaviour of one are brought forth through his manner of .thinking and his beliefs

If the beliefs of a person in relation to something reach to such a level that they overtake the importance of his own life, property and his entire existence, then without doubt he will exert as much energy that is needed to reach and protect his .(goals and will be ready to give up everything (to reach to such an aim

Principally, true faith and belief in something would produce such a strong love and affection in a person that sometimes without his

own volition he would express his love for that thing. It goes without saying that love is an internal, conscious feeling that makes a person act in a particular way out of its .own desire

The power and force that this emotion has on the internal conscious of a human being and the wave of excitement that love and affection bring about in a persons' life can .never be explained or brought about with proof or logic

Sometimes, it could be that countless points of logic and other sorts of proof could be brought forward to crush the internal feelings and emotions of a person, however when those same feelings become stronger and more powerful in the (spiritual) heart, then they uncontrollably take over a person and thus the person is left to .submit to his powerful inner emotions

For example, sometimes it may be impossible to get even one dollar from a person who has a strong love and affinity to money and wealth however when his child falls victim to an illness, then the natural instinct within himself that forces him to love his child takes precedence over his love for wealth. In such an instance, it is possible that he would even give away half of his wealth just to have his child cured from a !sickness

The feelings and inner desires, rather all of the innate characteristics of a human being bring about an intense form of (spiritual) movement and motion in a person, and if these

emotions and feelings are not controlled and channelled in a proper manner, then .truly the person would transgress many boundaries and limits

When we look at the self-sacrifice of people during the passing of time, we see individuals who in an urge to push their own goals and aims forward, became so uncontrollable and illogical that they ended up losing their own respect and dignity .just to make sure that their goals were achieved

It is because of this fact that it is said they have true faith in the bottom of their hearts for the goals that they were trying to reach towards and their faith created such a strong sense of love within themselves that without even calculating the outcome of their acts, they ended up sacrificing everything to reach to their goals and without any control, were pulled towards reaching it. If we see that at the final stages of their lives they even ended up forgetting their spouses and children and were still trying to .pursue their goals, then it is because of this reason

Sa`d Rabi` was one of the self-sacrificing companions of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) who possessed a heart that was overflowing with faith and sincerity. During the battle of Uhud, he fell to the ground with a staggering twelve injuries to his body and was in a state of giving up his life (when the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

commanded another believer to go and investigate the state of Sa`d Rabi` and to bring him back the real news of how he was.

Zaid ibn Thabit found this companion of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) amongst the others who had been killed on the battle field and (just before he died), he proceeded to ask how he was doing, to which Sa`d replied in the following manner:

"Tell the Prophet that there are only a few moments left in the life of Sa`d and may Allah give you, O' Messenger of Allah, the best reward that one who is a Prophet is entitled to receive." He then went on to say, "Convey my greetings to the companions of the Prophet and tell them that anytime any sort of injury or harm is inflicted on the Prophet and they are living then they must ask forgiveness from Allah for this."(١)

There is no love or affection greater than the love that true faith brings about in a person, since the person who has such a faith will be so drowned in the glory and beauty of the one that he loves and will strive to reach his goal, that he would be willing to give up his entire life to attain that which he loves, and will forget everything else around him.

The Areas Where Love is of No Use

Each and every person has been created with a specific inclination or set of emotions within him. This spiritual blessing exists in all people however

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١- Sirah Ibn Hisham, Volume ٢, Page ٤٩٧; Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ٢٠, Page ١٢١.

with a variance in its levels amongst people. Amongst all of the various levels that exist, women are the focal point of this inclination and it is their hearts which are full of .love and affection

One time, a Muslim woman of Madinah was told that three of her loved ones were killed in the battle of Uhud. This woman mounted a camel and proceeded towards the area where the battle of Uhud had taken place so that she could go and bring the bodies of her deceased ones back home for burial. On the return back to Madinah, she was carrying the three bodies with her on the camel and was getting ready to .enter into the city

Half way to the city, she met up with one of the wives of the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny). This wife of the Prophet asked the .lady how the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) was doing

This selfless woman – with a clear face resembling one who had not even seen the smallest difficulty – who was holding the ropes of the camel in one hand and was covered in the blood of the martyrs that were on the camel being transported back, said to the wife of the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), "I have good news for you and that is that the Prophet is alive and safe and because of this great

"!blessing, all other trials and tribulations seem to be insignificant, trivial things

The wife of the Prophet asked this lady, "Whose bodies are those?" The lady replied, "The one body is that of my husband, the second is that of my son and the third is my brother's. I am taking them all back to Madinah to have them buried there."(1)

What factors were responsible for this display of self-sacrifice and unselfishness in one's aim and purpose that flowed through this woman? How is it possible that such a true faith and strong affection to the true visage of Tawhid could be present in the heart of a person such that her innate inclinations of motherhood could be kept under !?such control

True Faith Takes the Place of the Forces of Equality

One of main reasons for the victories during the previous wars is the superiority of the military forces or at least being at par or balance with the opposing side. By this we mean that each side of the conflict would try their best to make sure that the number of soldiers and quantity of weapons would be equal with the opposing side so that .there would be some equality between the two armies

However in relation to the wars that are fought to defend the sanctity of an ideology and teachings in which the soldiers are equipped with true faith, inner desires, wishes and through their spiritual stimulants which make them go towards the enemies, at .no time can equality (of military strength) be the classification for victory

Rather, there

.Maghazi, Volume ۱, Page ۲۶۵ -۱

have been people who were small in number and insignificant (from the point of view of strength) that were victorious over a large group of people and it was the power of .their soul and spirit that made them victorious over their well-equipped enemy

For example, in the Battle of Badr, the forces of the idol worshippers were three times that of the Muslim forces. In addition, the entire force of the enemy was armed to the teeth with weapons and had enough troops mobilized (to win the battle). Before the flames of war erupted between these two groups, the elders of the Quraish requested one of the bravest men to go and count the number of companions of .(Muhammad (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

With his swift horse, he circled the camp of the Muslim army and returned with the following report: "The number of fighters with Muhammad does not exceed more than ٣٠٠ people and there are no other people behind them that could be used to ambush us. However, I also tried to study their mental and spiritual state and found "!that they have brought death and destruction from Madinah as a gift for you all

The man continued: "I saw a group of people who have nothing except for a sword to use for protection such that until they do not kill one of you, they will not be able to be killed. When this number of people have killed an equivalent

(number of you, then their lives will have no more worth."(1)

This man found all of the polytheists of the Quraish quiet, however the firm resolve could be seen on their faces and their snake-like venomous tongue was still in their mouths.

It is because of this that the Qur'an considers the greatest sign of true faith to be self-sacrifice when it mentions that those people who have true faith are those who as the Qur'an puts it: "Those who have true faith are those people who have a firm belief in Allah and His Messenger which is rooted in the bottom of their hearts and are willing to give up their lives and wealth to reach to their goals, surely it is these people who are the truthful ones."(2)

The Generation of Freedom

The second half of the twentieth century has been introduced as the generation of freedom for the exploited nations of the world. Those nations who for countless years were locked under the chains of colonization finally awoke and through their intelligence and vigilance, broke off the chains (of oppression) that were upon them and have proclaimed their freedom to the entire world.

However the only nations that proved to be successful were those who traversed this path (of freedom) with true faith and self-sacrifice in all areas of their lives and completely turned their backs to the colonizing empires of the world. The self-sacrifices of the freed nation of Algeria and the other countries of Africa are clear examples of this issue.

Today,

١- Sirah Ibn Hisham, Volume ١, Page ٦٢٢; Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ١٩, Page ٢٥١.

٢- Verse Under Discussion] Surah al-Hujurat (٤٩), Verse ١٥].

for the countries who are busy exploiting and colonizing others, there is no fear if a group of wicked, rebellious people that do not possess any spiritual goal and motives .based on true faith rise up in aggression

The greatest danger and threat for Imperialism on a national level are the developed nations which have true faith such that by relying on their faith and spiritual goals that they have set for themselves, have risen up and even with arrows and rocks, have been able to remove the colonial forces from their lands. As long as life is flowing through them, they will never rest for even one moment, and thus their eventual end .will be that of victory

The Infinite Knowledge of Allah

point

(Verse ۱۶)

قُلْ أَتُعَلِّمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰاتِ وَمَا فِى الأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Say (to the people O' Muhammad): 'Do you wish to teach Allah about your Din" (complete way of life) whereas Allah knows all that is contained in the Heavens and all ".that is upon the Earth; and surely Allah has complete knowledge of everything

The all-encompassing knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) over all of the creations of the world is referred to by various words and phrases in many places in :the Qur'an. One such phrase which is employed is

...بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

".complete knowledge of everything..."

This phrase has been mentioned in the above verse under discussion and has also .been repeated in over twenty other instances in the Qur'an

This sentence and other such examples negate any sort of ignorance on the part of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) in relation to any affair of even the smallest size. The Qur'an has not stopped at this sentence and in other verses as well, the encompassing knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has also been explained:

لاٌ يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّهٍ فِی السَّمٌوَاتِ وَ لاٌ فِی الأَرْضِ

"Not even the weight of an atom that is within the Heavens nor in the Earth is hidden from Him."(۱)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاٌ يَخْفَـی عَلَيْهِ شَیْءٌ فِی الأَرْضِ وَ لاٌ فِی السَّمٌاءِ

"Surely there is nothing that is hidden from Allah whether it be in the Earth or in the Heaven."(۲)

وَ عِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لاٌ يَعْلَمُهٌا إِلاٌّ هُوَ وَ يَعْلَمُ مٌا فِی الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ وَ مٌا تَسْـقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَهٍ إِلاٌّ يَعْلَمُهٌا وَ لاٌ حَبَّهٍ فِی ظُلُمٌاتِ الأَرْضِ وَ لاٌ رَطْبٍ وَ لاٌ يٌابِسٍ إِلاٌّ فِی كِتٌابٍ مُبِينٍ

"And with Him (Allah) are the Keys of the Unseen. No one knows them (the Secrets of the Unseen) except for Him (Allah). And He (Allah) knows all that is on the land and all that is in the seas and there is not even a single leaf that falls except that He has full knowledge of it and there is also not a single dry thing that is hidden in the darkness of the Earth, nor anything that is wet or dry, except that (all of these) are preserved in a Clear Book."(۳)

Is

۱- Surah al-Saba (۳۴), Verse ۳.

۲- Surah Aali Imran (۳), Verse ۵.

۳- Surah al-An`am (۶), Verse ۵۹.

there a more expressive way that these (verses of the Qur'an) can explain the comprehensive knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) over all of the ?creations

In one of his lectures, Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) has elucidated on the comprehensive knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) over :all of His creations of the world in the following manner

يَعْلَمُ عَجِيجَ الْوُحُوشِ فِى الْفَلَوٰاتِ وَ مَعٰاصِىَ الْعِبٰادِ فِى الْخَلَوٰاتِ وَاخْتِلاٰفَ الْحِيتٰانِ فِى الْبِحٰارِ الْغٰامِرٰاتِ وَتَلاٰطُمَ الْمٰاءِ بِالرِّيٰاحِ الْعٰاصِفٰاتِ.

He (Allah) knows of the cries of the beasts in the forest; the sins of the servants while" they are in seclusion and the movements of the fish in the deep seas and the rising of (the water by the tempestuous winds."(١

Proofs of Allah's Never-Ending Knowledge

point

Through various ways and methods available to them, the scholars and experts of Islamic Theology have proven the knowledge and wisdom of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) ranging from the smallest of creations to the phenomenon of the world, .as well as the secrets of the creation, and of these, we mention two

:(First Proof for the Comprehensive Knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He

Without doubt, the designer of a machine has knowledge of even the most intricate .١ workings of what he has manufactured. Is it possible to say that, "The manufacturer of a plane is unaware of a scientific or technical aspect of his design"?! Or, is it possible that the author of an encyclopaedia would not know what the contents of his own !?work are

In our previous discussion, we elucidated on the

۱- Nahjul Balagha, Khutbah ۱۹۳.

fact that if the presence of a creation proves that there was a creator to bring that thing about; and similarly the characteristics of the thing created give witness to the specific characteristics of the creator who has brought the thing into being, then any time the created thing is studied in detail in relation to its blue-print of creation, size, organization and arrangement of creation, then without doubt it would have to be said that the creator of that thing must be one who possesses knowledge - such that .through his extensive knowledge, we was able to bring about such a thing

Therefore, seeing as to how all of the creations of the world – from the atoms to the stars in the sky – have all been created according to a set plan and certain organized conventional rules, and day by day mankind is discovering the unity and harmony of the Universe and is becoming more and more aware (of its surroundings), therefore we must say that the world of creation has taken its beginnings from a very Learned and All-Knowing source that has complete knowledge of all the particularities. Thus, .He has created all of them in accordance with His pre-prepared plan

The existing order of every leaf from all of the leaves in creation; of every atom from all of the innumerable atoms; every particle from the particles that make up the human being; every cell from amongst all of the cells of living creatures; every star

from amongst the stars in the heavens - all point to the organization and order that exists and bears witness to the fact that the Creator of all of these things and all of their specifics that they possess, can only be the one All-Knowing (Allah). Therefore, it is impossible to think that the world of creation would come about without an All-Knowing Creator.

Guidance from the Qur'an on the First Proof

The Noble Qur'an has explained this proof in a very subtle manner and the creation of mankind has been used as the evidence of the knowledge of the Creator where it has been said:

أَلاٌ يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَ هُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِـیـــرُ

"What then does He who created (all), and He who is the knower of the subtleties - the Aware - not know (about His creations?)" (١)

In another verse of the Qur'an, it has been mentioned that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) is closer to the human being than his own jugular vein:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنٌا الإِنْسٌانَ وَ نَعْلَمُ مٌا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ وَ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

"Unquestionably We have created mankind and We know what his soul whispers to him (the evil whisperings) and We are closer to him than his jugular vein." (٢)

دل من تا ز دوست سرشار است دائم ازغیر دوست بیزار است

غایب از دیده و به در حاضر با چنین دلبری مرا کار است

As long as my heart is filled with the love of my friend (Allah),

It will always be averse from those who are not my friends.

Absent from the sight (is Allah),

.Surah al-Mulk (۶۷), Verse ۱۴ -۱

.Surah Qaf (۵۰), Verse ۱۶ -۲

,however attentive in the heart

.(I associate with none but such lovers (of Him

The eighth Imam, `Ali ibn Musa ar-Ridha (peace be upon him) has taken the unity of creation and organization of the universe, as the proof of the knowledge of a Creator :and has stated

أَتْقَنَ مَّا خَلَقَ بِحِكْمَتِهِ وَ وَضَعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ مَوْضِعَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ.

The world of creation has been made firm and solid through His plan based on" wisdom and everything has been placed in its rightful place through His (knowledge."(١

:(Second Proof for the Comprehensive Knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He

Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) is the One who is everywhere (at all times) and .٢ .has complete knowledge of all periods and all things

The second proof for the vast knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and His complete perception of all of the creations and events that are occurring in the universe - is the comprehensive knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) in relation to the origins and beginnings of the universe of creation and Him being .unlimited and unrestricted

The being which is unlimited and which is in all places at all times and sees all of the creations, is naturally more knowledgeable than anything else in existence. However, if such an entity was limited to the physical world and was imprisoned only to the limits of space, then it would not be possible for that being to have (complete) (knowledge and be fully aware of all things.(٢

In summary: There is not a single material creation that is independent of the

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.Bihar al-Anwar, Volume ۴, Page ۵۸ -١

۲ – In the upcoming sections, we will discuss further the issue of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) being free from the physical world and His being free from time and space.

sphere of time and the radius of existence and every single creation that is under the cover and control of time is limited to that restricted sphere of time which it is .contained in

Thus, it is not possible that any creation can occupy a previous or future period of time, other than its own and without doubt a creation has no way of being acquainted with events that have occurred in the past or in the future (through their own free will). However, if we were able to smash through the prisons of time and space and go into the sphere which is beyond time, then yesterday and today would have absolutely no meaning. Thus, time as we know it and the events that take place within it (both in the past and future) would be accessible to the person just as if the event .was happening in his own present time

Every single material creation maintains its existence in its specific place and fills a specific location and with this said, if something exists between him and something near to him, then this thing would be said as being close (to him); and if there was something that was a great distance from him, then it would be said that the thing is far (from him). However if a being was able to break through the prisons of time and was able to make himself needless of residing in a specific place and could place himself with a world

higher than that of space, then for him there would be no meaning of something being .close or far

:In order to make this point more clear, we relate the following examples

Example ١: Imagine a microscopic insect that possess a limited field of vision walking upon a colourful rug. At any point in time, this insect can only see one pattern and one specific colour (that is in front of him) and has knowledge of only that one particular .spot on the rug

Thus, it has no knowledge of another spot which is out of the ability of his sight and therefore he is completely unaware of it. However a human being that is standing beside the rug and can see the complete rug with all of its colours and patterns – which is completely opposite to how the insect can see it - has knowledge of the .complete rug

Example ٢: Imagine that we are sitting on the bank of a large river, along with a group of friends, watching the waves come in and are observing the movement of the water. At any single moment, we are witnessing a new wave and movement of water, however we do not have complete knowledge of all of the waves and all the water .from where this river begins up to the sea where the river drains into

The reason for this limited knowledge is because of the limited area that we are in which makes up the space which we occupy. If

we were to go on a plane and fly over the river, then at that time we would be able to see many different sections of the river and we would also be able to see all of the .waves and the flowing water that is in this river

Example ۳: Imagine once again that we are sitting in a small room which has only one small window through which we can see the outside world. All of a sudden, a caravan of camels carrying large loads passes by our room. From this small window, at any particular instance in time, we cannot see more than one camel. However a person .who is on the roof of the house would be able to see the entire caravan at one time

The condition of mankind in relation to the past and the future is the same as the person who is watching the caravan of camels through a small window. However the situation of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) who is free from material essence and thus is not limited to place, and in addition does not have any sort of limit in relation to time and space is present everywhere and sees everything in creation, which can be compared to a person who is sitting on the roof of his house and thus, can see .(everything that is around him (though this even is limited for a human being

Therefore, we must state that His essence is not limited, and His being

is present in all places at all times, and He is not limited to time or place. Thus, there is not a single time or place which is free from Him. He himself bears witness that His comprehensive knowledge encompasses all creations, and all events that have happened in the past, and those that will come in the future, are known to Him.

The Knowledge of God in the Tawrat

The Qur'an elucidates on the complete, All-Encompassing Knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) as has been mentioned. In comparison however, it is worthwhile to take a look at the Tawrat and see how this book introduces God. In the Tawrat, we read the following:

۱ "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

۲ The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ۳ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

۴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

۵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

۶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for

gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who .was with her, and he ate it

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so ۷
they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ۸ Then the man
and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the
cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ۹ But
"?the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so ۱۰
".I hid

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree ۱۱
"?that I commanded you not to eat from

The man said, "The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from ۱۲
".the tree, and I ate it

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman ۱۳
".said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate

So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you ۱۴
above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will
.eat dust all the days of your life

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and ۱۵
;hers

".he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel

۱۶ To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain
you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule
".over you

۱۷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about
which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of
you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ۱۸ It will produce
thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ۱۹ By the sweat of
your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were
".taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return

۲۰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.
۲۱ The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ۲۲
And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and
evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life
".and eat, and live forever

۲۳ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from
which he had been taken. ۲۴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the

east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth (to guard the way to the tree of life.”(١)

This is the God which the Tawrat introduces that when Adam hid in the garden, God had no knowledge where he was and thus, He was forced to call out to him that, “Adam, where are you?” This is the sort of God who does not know if Adam had eaten from the tree of wisdom; a God that forbids His servants from eating from the tree of knowledge and understanding; a God that fears that Adam will – without His knowledge – eat from the tree of perpetual life; a God that in order to stop Adam and his wife from reaching to the tree of everlasting life, hires Angels to be as police to !guard the tree

However, the God that is described in the Qur’an is One that has complete knowledge of that which is in the Heavens and the Earth; He also knows what is in the hearts of His creations and those of the desert `Arabs who claimed to have true faith in their :hearts were told that

أَتُعَلِّمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَّا فِى السَّمُوَّاتِ وَمَّا فِى الأَرْضِ...

Do you wish to teach Allah about your Din (complete way of life) whereas Allah knows“ ”...all that is contained in the Heavens and all that is upon the Earth

The God that the Qur’an introduces is completely opposite of the God that the Tawrat

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١ – Genesis, Chapter ٣ [The Fall of Man], extracted verbatim from the New International Version (NIV) of the Old Testament found on www.biblegateway.com .[[١٣

:mentions and with complete clarity, the Qur'an states that

وَ عَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا...

"...And He (Allah) taught Adam all of the names"

Thus, the verses of the Qur'an have introduced Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) as One who is completely free from all sorts of stinginess and miserliness in relation to .teaching and educating His servants of the truths of the universe

With this summary, the relation between the previous verse and the verse under discussion is clear and it is unambiguous that this verse explains the comprehensive knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) over everything that is hidden and the apparent phenomenon in creation and thus, nullifies the claims and assertions of the .desert `Arabs

The Greatest Blessing

(Verse ١٧)

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَّا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

The Bedouins tell you O' Muhammad that) you owe them (a great deal) for their) embracing (the religion of Islam). Say to them (O' Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that, 'You are not doing me any favour by embracing Islam. In fact, it is Allah who has done a great favour to you by guiding you to the true '.faith. (Think about this) if you are people of truth

The services of the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and the Noble Qur'an that he brought to the world of humanity can never be forgotten. The value of

this service can only be made clear when we study the thoughts, beliefs, customs and traditions of the nations at that time in history (leaving aside those animalistic nations and civilizations who possessed no culture) and compare these to the lofty goals and teachings of Islam and the blessings that the nations of the world were given due to the influence of the Islamic teachings. At this time would the value of the services that the teachings of Islam conferred upon the human society be made evident for all to .see

Eventually from the depths of their hearts, mankind will have to acknowledge that the superior teachings of the Qur’an and the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and .(his progeny) are the greatest blessings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He

Eventually, people will have to confirm that it is these teachings which is protecting the future generations, the culture of humanity and is the connection that lies between the old and new civilizations. It is this truth that has been mentioned in the :Qur’an by Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) when He said

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَهَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِی ضَلاَلٍ مُّبِينٍ

Certainly Allah granted a great favour to the believers when He raised up from“ amongst their own people a Messenger (Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to recite to them His (Allah’s) signs, to purify them

of moral defects), to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and before this they had) (surely lived in manifest error."(١)

We simply need to take a cursory glance at the past history of mankind, especially in those parts of the world in which the life-giving call of Tawhid and the prophetic missions of the appointed leaders of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) had not reached and then judge for ourselves to what extent Islam has helped and assisted .the world of humanity

The country of India - which is a vast region and from the point of view of being a machine-driven society - is one of the most advanced countries in the East, however .their government and nation still are held captive to the authority of the sacred cow

Some time back, in order to prevent a massive famine and starvation which was placing the lives of its' people in danger, the government gave the permission to kill cows (for food), however mass confusion engulfed the entire country which was followed up with fierce fighting and riots! Due to this, one of the ministers of the Government was fired from his job and thus the state of the country and the (government in power was made unstable!(٢

There is not a single person in all of India who enjoys the same level of freedom, respect and character as the sacred cow does and it suffices us to mention this final point that many times, it has been seen that

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١- Surah Aali Imran (٣), Verse ١۶۴.

٢- Various Newspaper articles.

from out of nowhere, a cow will come and sit in the middle of the street and behind .(him, a large line-up of cars will be waiting (for the cow to move

The police will not interfere in this issue nor would anyone else have the courage to touch the cow or cause him any sort of discomfort. Thus in the end, it is up to the cow and his own intentions to decide when he will get up and move out of the way, ending .this inconvenience to the people

If the cow was to sit down on the railway tracks, the train operator would be obliged to apply the breaks and stop there in waiting until the cow gets up and moves away on his own free will, thus removing this inconvenience from the passengers in the !train

The number of sacred cows in this country is well over ١٥٠,٠٠٠,٠٠٠. Just picture for one minute if all of these cows were completely free (to do as they want) and were at ?peace (with whatever they were doing) - what would be the outcome

Without doubt they would destroy all the farms. They would manage to eat up the food that is earmarked for hundreds of millions of people for the upcoming years and in the end who knows what the outcome would be? Nothing. In addition, when these cows die, their corpses must be disposed of in such a way (that does not show any disrespect for them) and

.this too creates great headaches for the people

Another point of amazement to us is that how is it possible for humanity - who have ascended into the heavens on the wings of knowledge and intelligence – to be so separated from the teachings of the Heavenly Prophets and show such humility and !humbleness to a cow

How do we know that if the call of the life-saving teachings of Tawhid had not reached our country we too may have fallen into this same state or even worse? How do we know that if the Noble Qur'an and the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) - with the logic that (they brought) that knocked sense into us and that unseen self-sacrifice - had not stood up against the idols and the various types of idol worshipping, that today, just like a large number of people of the world and those countries that are around us who have beliefs such as the cow-worshippers of India, fire-worshippers, sun worshippers, those who worship rocks ?and pieces of wood – that we too would have not have been as they are

The country of Japan is one of the most advanced countries in the world today. The products of this country are in competition in the free market with the goods made in America and the European countries; however this nation, which has reached to and conquered the machine age are so engulfed in shameful thoughts and imaginations such that

.the pen is even ashamed to write such things

One of the businessmen of our country (Iran) who has been quite active in trade and commerce in Japan for some time now once said, "Unfortunately, the majority of the people of the nation of Japan are idol worshippers and for every event that comes up in their lives, they believe that a separate god and creator is responsible for that .event and they attribute it to him

For example, they have fashioned a god of rain, a god of war and a god of peace, etc... One of their gods is the god that brings a man to a woman who is looking to get married. In the idol-worshipping centres of this country, these idols are made to resemble shocking and repulsive shapes; for example (the god that they believe helps a woman find her mate) actually resembles what they think such a god would look like. Women who are single actually pay visitation to this place at specific times and "!ask their requests from such things

This act shows the level and degree of intelligence of a nation who has penetrated through the realms of the heavens and has explored deep into the oceans and whose .entire life and existence has been changed through technology and expertise

Through a cursory glance at this scene and by studying this part of the world which has been deprived of the spiritual bounties of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), do we still

?fail to recognize the service and benefits that Islam has brought to civilization

Seeing as how Ja`far ibn Abi Talib had observed – from close up – the corruption that idol worshipping had brought and the dangers that were brought about by being distanced from the teachings of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), when the ruler of Habasha (present day Ethiopia) asked him about the true visage of Islam, he replied :in the following manner

O King, we were an unenlightened people plunged in ignorance. We worshipped" idols, we ate animals that died on their own, and we committed many other abominations. We broke the natural ties (of family) and mistreated our neighbours .and the strong amongst us exploited the weaker ones

We lived in this manner until Allah raised among us a Prophet of noble birth and lineage, truthfulness, honesty and purity that we were all aware of. He invited us to acknowledge the Unity of Allah and to worship Him and to renounce the stones and .idols that our forefathers and we ourselves used to venerate

He enjoined us to speak the truth, to redeem our pledges, to be kind and considerate to our kin and neighbours; he forbade and told us to refrain from every vice including bloodshed, shamelessness, lies, deceit and told us not to encroach upon the rights of .the orphans nor to vilify chaste women

He commanded us to pay divine homage to Allah alone and never associate others with Him; he ordered us to

offer prayers, to pay the Zakat, to observe the fast (thus enumerating other injunctions of Islam).

We acknowledged his truthfulness and believed in him; we followed him in whatever he brought from Allah and we worshipped only One God without associating anything or anyone else with Him; we treated as unlawful what he prohibited and accepted what he made lawful for us.

From then on, we were estranged from our own people such that they persecuted us, tried to seduce us from our faith and forced us to take back the idols as our gods and they even compelled us to return to the abominations we had committed earlier. So when they tortured us and held us under their tyranny and stood between us and our religion, we fled to your country having chosen you above all others for refuge. We have come here, O' King, to your land seeking your protection and we hope that we shall not be dealt with unjustly."(1)

Since Ja`far ibn Abi Talib and those who were with him had seen the manifestation and outcome of not subscribing to a religion and the state of those who were free in their (religious) practices, they realized the true importance of the teachings of Islam and thus considered it even more worthy than their own lives.

However, those people who have been born into a religious and spiritual family and have not had to travel the difficult path to find religion, nor have they been abused and had

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1- Sirah of Ibn Hisham, Volume ۱, page ۳۳۶ (adapted from the translation found on [۱۴] www.islamvision.org).

wounds inflicted upon them in this path to the point where their blood has been shed, would never understand the true importance that religion has and the important role .that it plays in the improvement and well-being of a society

شب باران و بیم موج و گردابی چنین هایل

کجا دانند حال ما سبکباران ساحلها!؟

,A rainy night and the scary ocean swells with uneasy storms

.The light rain on the coasts can never know this (turbulent) state

The Qur'an considers religion as being the greatest spiritual blessing that has been :given to mankind

وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْـمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْـتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَـأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُـوبِكُمْ

And recall (O' Muslims) the blessings of Allah that were showered upon you during" the time when you were enemies of one another and (through the blessings of Allah) (He united your hearts."(1

On the day that the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) made known his Wasi (successor), the revelation of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) came :down to him and referred to this event (18th of Dhul Hijjah) as the greatest blessing

أَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَ أَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي...

This day (18th of Dhul Hijjah) have I (Allah) completed your religion for you and have I" (perfected upon you My bounties."(2

The `Arabs that lived in the desert imagined that by simply accepting Islam, they had done a service to the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and through this act of theirs, they felt as if they had put

۱- Surah Aali Imran (۳), Verse ۱۰۳.

۲- Surah al-Maidah (۵), Verse ۵.

.(an obligation upon the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny

However, if they had truly and sincerely accepted Islam, then at the first level (of their submission) they would have derived much benefit, since the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) would have been obligated to grace and bless them since they had chosen the path of happiness and the road to complete :perfection just as it has been mentioned in the Qur'an

بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلإِی_مَانِ

(Rather, it is Allah who has laid upon you an obligation by guiding you to the faith."(١"

One of the distinctions of the Qur'an is that there is not a single instance in which it neglects to mention any detail or aspect and it tackles every issue that it speaks about from various different aspects. For example, in the verse under discussion, when it is mentioned in regards to the desert `Arabs and their apparent acceptance of the :religion of Islam and attributing this as being Iman or true faith, the Qur'an then says

أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلإِی_مَانِ

".by guiding you to the faith..."

:And immediately it ends with the following sentence

...إِنْ كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

".if you are truthful..."

By this it is meant that attributing true faith (Iman) to these people is something that they themselves had said in regards to their own souls, but in the opinion of the .Qur'an, true faith (Iman) had not yet entered into their hearts

By the Qur'an mentioning this condition, it removes

.Surah al-Hujurat (۴۹), Verse ۱۷ -۱

any kind of contradiction that might be imagined in relation to this verse and the previous verse (verse number ۱۴) since in the ۱۴th verse of this Surah, it is clearly mentioned that these people had accepted Islam however they were devoid of true .(faith (Iman

Thus, if in this verse they were to be counted amongst the ranks of the Believers (Mu'minin) which is the greatest blessing of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He), then it is only due to the fact that this is what they themselves claimed about their own souls :and it is for this reason that immediately, the Qur'an replies to them that

...إِنْ كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

".if you are truthful..."

Knowledge of the Unseen

(Verse ۲۰)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Certainly Allah has (complete) knowledge of that which is hidden in the Heavens and" ".the Earth and Allah is the One who Sees what all of you (His creations) do

is something that is covered. Anything (غيب) "The lexical meaning of the word "hidden that is hidden or concealed from us – whether this is something physical which is discernable by the senses or something that is Divine, however it has been clothed with the physical (world) and is far from being discernable by our senses – is referred .(غيب) to as being of the hidden

Those events that have occurred in the past or the events that will come about in the future, even if on their own are things which can be

recognized by our senses, however in the present time they are outside of our jurisdiction, are also clear examples of what is considered as unseen (غیب).

Those affairs that naturally cannot be discerned by our senses and which are far above that which mankind is able to discern or understand with his limited ability of perception such as the Essence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) or His Characteristics; the reality of the raising up from the graves and many other things are all issues that are related to the Knowledge of the Unseen and it is only Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) who has complete knowledge of these things.

Until that time that mankind does not understand and unlock the mysteries of the universe, method of creation, the rules that govern the world of creation, and does not gain knowledge of these things, all of these will continue to remain as issues related to the unseen, which maybe slowly and gradually will enter into the knowledge of mankind.

The tiny and minute creations and also the large creatures that exist around us - both those that live on the land and in the depths of the oceans which are scattered around - have all been created according to their own disciple and order, and all of these will remain as issues of the unknown. This is the point which has been alluded to in this verse when He (Glorified and Exalted is He) says:

وَ لِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰاوٰاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ

".And to Allah belong the unknown secrets of the Heavens and the Earth"

From this verse of the Qur'an and many other verses, we realize that the only One who has complete Knowledge of the Unseen is Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He):

وَ عِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحَ الْغَيْبِ لاَ يَعْلَمُهَا إِلاَّ هُوَ

"And with Him are the keys of the Unseen that no one knows except for Him."(1)

قُلْ لاَ يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰاتِ وَالأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلاَّ اللّٰهُ

"Say (O' Muhammad) no one has knowledge of that which is hidden in the Heavens and the Earth except for Allah."(2)

Without doubt, Knowledge of the Unseen which is specifically limited to Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and not a single person shares in this knowledge, is the comprehension of the Essence and Pre-Existence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) which He has not received from anywhere – rather, this is His actual essence and He is free from all sorts of possible obligations, limits and confines.

However, by Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) limiting the allocation of such Knowledge of the Unseen to Himself it does not mean that at times, some of His specific servants cannot be acquainted with some of this hidden knowledge by them. It has been mentioned in regards to the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) that:

عٰالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلاٰ يُظْهِرُ عَلى غَيْـبِهِ أَحَداً إِلاَّ مَنِ ارْتَضى مِنْ رَسُولٍ

"The Knower of the Unseen (Allah) so then He does not make known what

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۱- Surah al-An`am (۶), Verse ۵۹.

۲- Surah al-Naml (۲۷), Verse ۶۵.

is hidden to a single person except those whom He is pleased with from amongst His (Messengers."(1)

According to the clear reading of this verse of the Qur'an, the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) had been permitted to have the Knowledge of the Unseen by the permission of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and thus he had been .informed of hidden events and issues that would come to pass

This issue is not only limited to the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) - rather according to the clear verses of the Qur'an, even Prophet `Isa ibn Mariam al-Masih (peace be upon them) was acquainted with a great deal of information that had come from the Knowledge of the Unseen. The Qur'an quotes :him as saying to the people

وَ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمٌا تَأْكُلُونَ وَ مٌا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِى بُـيُوتِكُمْ

And I inform you of what you eat (even though I have not seen you eating) and that" (which you store in your houses."(٢)

Prophet Nuh (peace be upon him), the Leader of the Prophets (Shaikhul Anbiya'), was one of those people who requested Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) to destroy the people of his community (due to the sins they were committing). In relation to the outcome of his people and that of his own children, he was informed (given :Knowledge of the Unseen) that

رَبِّ لاٌ تَضَرْ عَلى الأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكٌافِرِينَ دَيٌّاراً إِنَّکَ إِنْ تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبٌادَکَ وَ لاٌ يَلِدُوا إِلاٌّ فٌاجِراً

١- Surah al-Jinn (٧٢), Verse ٢۶.

٢- Surah Aali Imran (٣), Verse ۴٩.

كَفّاراً

And Nuh said) O’ my Lord! Do not leave upon the Earth any dweller from amongst)“ the unbelievers for surely if You leave them, they will lead Your servants astray and (will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children).”(١)

In addition, in three separate incidents that occurred, the travel companion of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) – meaning Prophet Khidhr (peace be upon him) – .informed Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) of Knowledge of the Unseen

The first event was when he damaged the ship; the second was when he killed the young boy; and the third one was when he came across the dilapidated wall in the city which he rebuilt. In order to remove the surprise and shock of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him), Prophet Khidr (peace be upon him) proceeded to explain his astonishing actions to him by detailing the events that would occur in the future that were hidden from the understanding and knowledge of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) by :saying to him

Since the oppressive ruler of the time was taking away all of the ships of the people“ and it was possible that theirs (owner of that ship) too would be taken, I damaged a part of the ship since I wanted this oppressive king to lose interest in this ship. The young boy that I killed was due to the fact that if he continued to live, he would have chosen the path of rebellion and corruption, and continuing

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.Surah Nuh (٧١), Verse ٢۶ ٢٧ –١

.in this course of life, he would have ended up murdering both his mother and father

I fixed the wall that was almost destroyed since under the wall, there was a buried treasure that belonged to two orphans. By fixing the wall, I intended to keep the treasure hidden from the eyes of the people of that city so that in the future, those (who owned that wealth could take it out (and make use of it)."(1)

That which has been mentioned are all examples of events that were hidden and only those servants of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) which He is pleased and content with were given knowledge of. These sorts of events occurring can never be interpreted as these personalities being partners with Allah (Glorified and Exalted is .He) since these two types of knowledge are different and separate from one another

The knowledge of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) and the Knowledge of the Unseen is inherent and is not something that can be acquired – it is pre-existent and is in no way limited or restricted. However, the knowledge of the Prophets and those people who are the worthy and suitable servants of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) is .limited and restricted

After Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) conquered the city of Basrah (in present day Iraq) and destroyed the power and influence of those who broke their treaty with him (namely Talhah and Zubair), he then proceeded

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.Surah al-Kahf (۱۸), Verse ۶۰ – ۸۲ -۱

to inform the people of the events that would occur in the future in Basrah. One of the companions of the Imam (peace be upon him) asked him, "Do you inform us of the Unseen (غيب)?" The Imam (peace be upon him) replied to him as follows:

لَيْسَ هُوَ بِعِلْمِ غَيْبٍ وَ إِنَّمَا هُوَ تَعَلُّمٌ مَنْ ذِی عِلْمٍ

"This is not information of the unseen (that is limited only to Allah and of which no one else has permission to know), rather that what I say is knowledge that one who possesses knowledge (the Prophet of Allah) taught me."(1)

In addition, there are countless narrations that bear witness to the fact that our religious leaders - the A'immah (peace be upon all of them) - in certain instances and circumstances, had informed us of events that would occur in the future.

Of these instances is the Knowledge of the Unseen that Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) referred to as "...that which the one who possess knowledge taught me" and obviously such a report and Knowledge of the Unseen can never be construed to go against the verses of the Qur'an that speak of the Knowledge of the Unseen being limited to the Essence of Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) alone.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) commanded His Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to tell the people the following: "I never claim to have Knowledge of the Unseen and if I had such

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۱- Nahjul Balagha, Speech ۱۲۸.

knowledge, then surely very many bad things would have been kept away from ".myself and I would have had much good come to me

لَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَأَسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ

And had I (Muhammad"

".(known the unseen I would have had much good (come to me (

(۱)

In another verse of the Qur'an, the Prophet (Glorified and Exalted is He) is :commanded to say to the people

لاٰ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِى خَزٰائِنُ اللّٰهِ وَ لاٰ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ

I (Muhammad) do not say that I have the hidden secrets of Allah with me, nor do I" (have Knowledge of the Unseen."(۲

The purpose of these noble verses is not to show some sort of humility or humbleness in the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny); rather this is a truth that the Qur'an is elucidating upon and the logical and philosophical reasons and other .verses of the Qur'an also confirm this belief

However, it goes without saying that the purpose of these verses – by the testimony of the Qur'an itself which is currently under study – is that specific Knowledge of the Unseen which none other than Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) has access to is the boundless, limitless Divine Knowledge - meaning the Knowledge of the Essence and Pre-Eternity of Allah (the knowledge which is the Essence of Allah and is neither an .(addition to His Essence, that knowledge which has been with Him for eternity

Thus, these verses do not negate the Knowledge of the Unseen being provided to

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.Surah al-A`raf (۷), Verse ۱۸۸ -۱

.Surah Hud (۱۱), Verse ۳۱ -۲

the Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) through Divine revelation or from the information given to him through the Angels or from some other means that are made accessible to him as all of these forms of Knowledge of the Unseen are limited and not a part of his essence - rather, they must be acquired.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) informed Adam, the Father of Humanity, with a series of truths and Names, that even the Angels were not acquainted with and it is the Angels who were even prevented from such magnificent knowledge!(١)

In addition, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) informed the mother of Musa of the outcome of the struggles of her child.(٢)

He (Glorified and Exalted is He) also informed His final Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) of that fact that some of his wives were spreading secrets about him to others(٣) - and thus, this is that same Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) who is able to permit His other righteous servants to be acquainted with the Knowledge of the Unseen.

It is in the greatness of His glory that they are able to (with the permission of Allah), be informed of the events that have happened in the past and those that will occur in the future and there is not the smallest amount of doubt – either from the point of view of what our knowledge tells us, nor from the related

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١- Surah al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٣١ - ٣٣

٢- Surah al-Qasas (٢٨), Verse ١٠.

٣- Surah al-Tahrim (۶۶), Verse ١٣.

.proofs (Qur'an and ahadith) in regards to this

Yahya ibn `Abdullah has said, "I was in the presence of Imam Musa ibn Ja`far al-Kadhim and asked him: 'Do you have Knowledge of the Unseen?' In relation to my question, he become upset and said to me, 'From this type of question, the hairs on the body of a person will stand up! That which we know and we inform you about is (the knowledge which has reached us from the Prophet of Allah.'"(١)

وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰالَمِينَ

and all the praise belongs solely to Allah, the Lord of the Universe...

Appendix: Explanatory Translation of Surah al-Hujurat

point

(Explanatory Translation of Surah al-Hujurat (The Rooms) (٢)

Please note that the Original `Arabic text has been translated and formatted as normal text, whereas the explanatory translation is in italics. The subscripted number .preceding the text refers to the verse number

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Obedience to the Shari`ah

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ {١}

١ O you who believe! In the matters of the shari`ah do not go ahead of or take precedence before Allah and His Messenger and the Imams; and fear the punishment of Allah for such actions, and be careful of what you say or write about the shari`ah because Allah surely is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. (During the Occultation of the Present Imam, the same discipline should be observed by following the most learned (.mujtahid – expert of Islamic laws – of our time

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ

Rijal al-Kishi, Pages ۲۵۲-۲۵۳; Amali of Shaikh Mufid, Third Sitting, Page ۴۹۳. For a - ۱ deeper understanding on the issue of Knowledge of the Unseen, refer to the book, Mafahim al-Qur'an, Pages ۳۲۱ to ۳۸۳. In this section of the book, a complete discussion in relation to the Knowledge of the Unseen of the Prophet and the A'immah has been .covered

We reproduce the explanatory translation of Surah al-Hujurat from the Holy - ۲ Qur'an as translated by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi [with permission from the translator]. This translation has been extracted from Volume ۲ of his work entitled, "An (.Explanatory Translation of the Holy Qur'an" (ISBN ۰-۹۲۰۶۷۵-۰۲-۶) (Tr

آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ {٢}

O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet. After the ٢ death of the Prophet the believers can follow this command of Allah by not voicing their objections against the laws brought by the Prophet. And do not talk loudly to him as you talk to one another. Heed to these two commands, lest all your deeds become .forfeited in such a way that you won't even realize it

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ {٣}

Surely those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah are ٣ the people whose souls have been tested by Allah for their piety (tawqa); for them, and for all those who heed to the above command, is the forgiveness of Allah and a .great reward

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ {٤}

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّىٰ تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {٥}

During the last years of the Prophet's life, many individuals and groups came to Madinah to visit the Prophet. Among these visitors, the Bedouins behaved in such a way that even Allah did not like it. Whenever they entered the city of Madinah, they would all go to the Prophet's house at the same time and call him out to see him; they did not realize

that the Prophet was entitled to some privacy and rest. ۴ Surely most of the people who call you, O Muhammad, from outside(۱) the rooms, do not understand. ۵ If they waited patiently until you come out to them, this would be better for them. And Allah is .Forgiving and Merciful

Criterion of Truth Falshood in News

Walid bin `Uqbah bin Abi Mu`it of the tribe of Bani Umayyah was sent by the Prophet to the people of Bani Mustalaq to collect zakat. In pre-Islamic days, Walid and Bani Mustalaq were enemies of each other. When the people of Bani Mustalaq came to know that Walid is coming as a representative of the Prophet, they came forward to welcome him. When Walid saw them from far, he thought that they have come to fight against him because of their past enmity. Thus he returned to Madinah before even meeting the Bani Mustalaq people. In Madinah, he reported to the Prophet that, ".“The tribe of Bani Mustalaq had given up Islam and refused to pay zakat

When the representatives of Bani Mustalaq came to Madinah to inquire about the .strange attitude of Walid, they found the Prophet very upset with them

It was in relation to this false report of Walid bin `Uqbah that Allah revealed the :(following verse(۲

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ {۶}

O you who believe! If a sinful person comes to you with news or a report about a ۶ person or people; then ascertain

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The original words in `Arabic are min wara` which means “from behind”; but in -۱ ”.accordance with the present-day context, I have translated it as “from outside

.Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir al-Kashsaf, Volume ۳, Page ۱۲۹ -۲

the truth of his report lest you harm a people because of your ignorance and then regret what you have done. (Therefore think twice before you criticize any Muslim nation or people when some news concerning it comes from a source which is (.unreliable or opposed to Islam

Obedience to the Prophet

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۚ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ {٧}

فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ {٨}

And O you the believers, know that the Messenger of Allah is among you; if he were ٧ to obey you in most things, for example, in the case of Walid's false report, then surely you would fall into trouble. But Allah has saved you from trouble by endearing the faith to you, by adorning it for your hearts and by arousing dislike in you to disbelief, transgression and disobedience. These people who follow the commands of the Prophet and his rightful successors are the rightly guided people. ٨ This right guidance .is a grace from Allah and a favour and Allah is indeed All-Knowing and Wise

Islamic Solidarity

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ {٩}

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ {١٠}

If two parties of believers, or two people, fight with each other, then don't ٩

.just stand as on-lookers, but go forward to make peace between them

But if one of them refuses to make peace and continues to oppress the other, then you should fight the oppressor until he agrees to return and heed to the command to Allah. When the oppressor heeds to the commandments of Allah, then make peace between them on basis of justice and act with equity. Surely Allah loves those who act with equity. (Therefore to be "non-aligned" in regards to affairs of the Muslims is an (.un-Islamic attitude

Why should a Muslim brother (or people) bother himself to make peace between two Muslims? What right does he have to do so? ١٠ Surely the believers are but brothers, therefore, if two believers fight each other then you, as brothers, should make peace between your brothers. And while making peace act justly and fear the punishment of .Allah, so that He may have mercy on you

Some Moral Rights of Muslims

As the Muslims have been declared brothers of each other, they must respect the :rights of one another. These rights are of reciprocal nature

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ ۖ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۖ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ {١١}

A. ١١ O you who believe! People should not laugh at, or make fun of, another people, because possibly those who are being laughed at may be better, in the

view of Allah than those who laugh. Nor should women laugh at other women because possibly those who are being laughed at may be better, in the view of Allah, .than those who laugh

B. Do not find fault with your own Muslim brothers, rather pay more attention to self-.criticism and to your own perfection

C. Do not call one another by bad and insulting nicknames, because calling someone by bad names after his declaration of the faith is itself a transgression. And those who indulge in these wrongful acts and do not ask forgiveness for their sins; they are the .unjust people

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ {١٢}

D. ١٢ O you who believe! Avoid most of the suspicious thoughts about other Muslims; .for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin

.E. And do not spy on each other

F. Nor should some of you back-bite others. Does any one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?! Surely you abhor it. Suspicion leads to spying and spying in turn leads to backbiting. Avoidance of suspicion helps in refraining from spying on others and thus backbiting. So fear the punishment of Allah in violating these rights of a .Muslim brother. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving and Merciful

Racism Rejected

One of the most abhorring social features of our present age is racial discrimination. Almost

every country and community suffers from this social disease in varying degrees. :Addressing the human society, Allah says

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ {۱۳}

O you men! We have created you from a male and a female (i.e., Adam and ۱۳ Hawwa), and then We made you into different races and tribes so that you may know .and recognise each other

According to Islam, each and every human being is from Adam and Hawwa. Allah divided them into different tribes and races so that it would be easy to recognise one another. Thus the difference in race, tribe, colour and language are to facilitate the .recognition of each other

These physical and material differences cannot be a standard for preference or superiority of one group over others. Besides knowledge and jihad (in its every sense), the only mark of distinction in Islam is taqwa i.e., piety and God fearing. Surely the most honourable of you in Allah's sight is the one who is most pious among you; .surely Allah is All-Knowing and Aware

Difference Between Islam and Iman: Submission Conviction

The Bedouin people of Bani Asad were overcome by famine. They came to Madinah and declared themselves Muslims. Then they asked the Prophet to give them some of the zakat. They talked to the Prophet in such a way that it seemed that they had done him a favour by becoming Muslims, and that he was obliged to help them. It was about

:them that Allah says

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا ۖ قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَٰكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِی قُلُوبِكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {۱۴}

The Arabs of the desert say, "O Muhammad! We believe in you and your God." Tell ۱۴
them: "You do not believe in me or my Lord, however you should say, 'We submit (aslamna) ourselves to your Lord,' because the faith (iman) has not yet entered into your hearts. But if you sincerely obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish ".anything from your deeds. Surely Allah is Forgiving and Merciful

Therefore, Islam (submission) and Iman (faith, conviction) are two different stages of belief. "Islam" is verbal confession, whereas "Iman" is spiritual conviction; Islam is believing in Allah and His Messenger by just following others (like parents and society, etc.), whereas Iman is believing in Allah and His Messenger after achieving conviction .about the truth of Allah and His Messenger

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِی سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ {۱۵}

The next verse defines the mu'minin (those who believe with conviction) vis-a-vis the .(muslimin (those who verbally submit themselves to Allah

:The mu'minin (believers) are only those who ۱۵

;believe in Allah and His Messenger, verbally as well as spiritually •

and then they never doubt in their faith because it originates from conviction not • ;blind following

and they struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of •

.Allah

.These are the truthful believers

قُلْ أَتُعَلِّمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ {١۶}

O Muhammad, tell those Arabs that: Are you appraising Allah about your religion by ١۶
saying that, “We Believe?” Allah knows what is in the Heavens and what is in the Earth.
.Allah knows all things

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا ۖ قُلْ لَا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ ۖ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {١٧}

By becoming Muslims, they seem to do you a favour! Tell them that, “By becoming ١٧
Muslims you do not do me a favour, rather Allah has done you a favour by guiding you
.to the faith. This is a fact which you can easily understand if you are truthful

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ {١٨}

Surely Allah knows the unseen things of the heavens and the earth, and Allah sees ١٨
.what you do

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About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

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